Next Month

and later

AMERICAN CITIES

Recent FORUM articles critical in various degrees of a number of American cities have been the subject of considerable comment both in the press and in communications to us from readers. Naturally, wounded civic pride has caused many an outraged native to boil with indignation; and THE FORUM has frequently been accused of unjustifiable muckraking. But the Editors believe that municipal government and the organization of modern city life, generally speaking, are no credit to American civilization. Since 1932 or thereabouts, public attention has been centered on political and social problems of a national character; but, sooner or later, city dwellers are going to have to get busy and clean up the rubbish that meanwhile has been accumulating in their own back yards. Furthermore — the outraged native sons to the contrary notwithstanding — FORUM readers appear to have been following this series with attention and pleasure. For these reasons, the articles will continue from time to time. Before taking offense, readers are asked to remember that the purpose of the articles is a serious one.

THE UNCHRISTIAN FRONT

Theodore Irwin

An examination of the rabble army of anti-Semites and sundry other exponents of a spurious Americanism who, led by a strangely assorted lot of loudly braying Führers, have been causing trouble in New York, Detroit, and elsewhere.

STORM WARNING TO THE SOUTH

Stirling Thompson

It is hard for Puerto Rico to make the front pages of our newspapers except through calamity, assassination, or a public dispute among Washington officials. But a lot of people down there are dependent on decisions made for them in our Congress, and that vexing question of "independence" is going to plague us more before we find an answer for it. Mr. Thompson tells about Puerto Rico's troubles, but he isn't sure of the answer either.

F O R U M

and Century

FEBRUARY 1940

What Has Happened to Sea Power? . . . . . WILLIAM OLIVER STEVENS 49

Elegant Indigence in Baltimore . . . . . AUDREY GRANNEBERG 54

This Trash Must Go! . . . . . COURTNEY RYLEY COOPER 61

Has Germany a "Death Ray"? . . . . . ALBERT BRANDT 65

The Forum Quiz . . . . . JO H. CHAMBERLIN 70

Our Rostrum 72

Life and Literature . . . . . MARY M. COLUM 74

The Group Mind and the Individual

A Country Boy Goes Home . . . . . R. HAVELOCK-BAILIE 81

Setting Hen . . . . . ROBERT P. TRISTRAM COFFIN 86

A Poem

The Fake-Claims Racket . . . . . ROBERT MONAGHAN 87

George Horace Gallup: Oracle in Tweed . . . . . RICHARD G. HUBLER 92

The Artist's Point of View . . . . . RALPH M. PEARSON 96

Nassau and the Bahamas . . . . . HARRY J. PRICE I

The Book Forum . . . . . *Conducted by* ELEANOR VAN ALEN IV

Toasts VII

VOL. CIII—No. 2

HENRY GODDARD LEACH, *Editor*

P. G. MOIR, *Managing Editor* J. H. TOMPKINS, *Assistant Editor*

Editorial Associates: JO H. CHAMBERLIN MARY M. COLUM

LETA CLEWS CROMWELL RALPH M. PEARSON ELEANOR L. VAN ALEN

THE FORUM combined with THE CENTURY MAGAZINE (Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.), is published monthly by the Forum Publishing Company, Inc. 35 cents a copy; $4.00 a year; foreign subscription $5.00, Canadian $4.50. Publication office, 10 Ferry Street, Concord, N. H. Editorial and general offices, 570 Lexington Avenue, New York, N. Y. Henry Goddard Leach, Board Chairman; James H. Van Alen, President; Edward F. Healey, Vice President and Business Manager; P. G. Moir, Secretary; Albert H. Walsh, Advertising Manager. Back copies not over three months old, 35 cents; all other back copies, $1.00. Five weeks' advance notice required for change of address, and such notices must supply the old address as well as the new. Indexed in the *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature.*

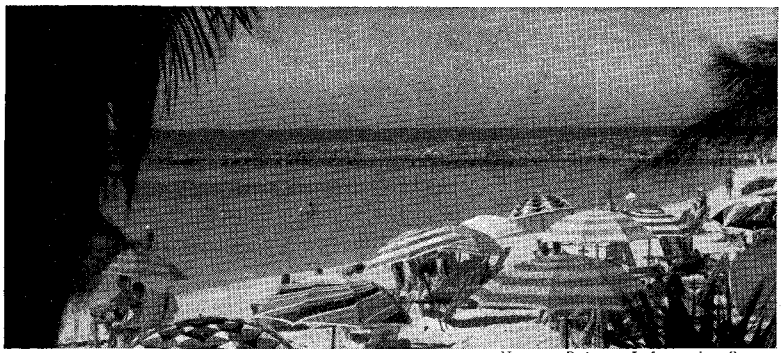
All manuscripts should be typewritten, accompanied by self-addressed stamped envelope, and addressed to the Editor at the New York office. No responsibility is assumed for the return of unsolicited manuscripts.

Printed in the United States of America. Entered as second-class matter at the post office at Concord, N. H., under Act of March 3, 1879.

Copyright 1940, in the United States and Great Britain by Forum Publishing Company, Inc. No article in this issue may be reprinted in whole or in condensed form without express permission from the publishers.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Nassau and the Bahamas



Nassau, Bahama Information Bureau

Paradise Beach, Nassau

by HARRY J. PRICE

In the journal of his first voyage Christopher Columbus wrote: "We came to a small island of the Lucayos." "Lucayos" is the native name for the Bahamas — the chain of seven hundred islands southeast of Florida of which Nassau, on the island of New Providence, is the capital.

The Bahamas have some of the most magnificent examples of marine life which can be seen anywhere. But the luxuriant marine coral gardens and brilliantly colored tropical fish are hardly a more vivid spectacle than the vegetation on the islands themselves. Thirty species of orchids grow there. The silk cotton tree spreads an enormous trunk and huge branches over an area a hundred yards in diameter. The red, pink, or orange hibiscus is pre-eminent among the flowers, but the oleander thrives profusely, and the royal poinciana, growing to be a large tree and blooming from June to October, is startling against the rich turquoise sea. Rarest is the lovely purple passion flower, which is difficult to see but worth the effort.

After their discovery by Columbus, title to the Bahamas was the subject of violent dispute between Spain and England for two hundred years. In addition, the settlements were subject to periodic and devastating pirate raids. Many pirates, indeed, had their bases in the islands, and a lookout tower built by the notorious Blackbeard still stands in Nassau. Not until the early eighteenth century did a succession of British governors bring lasting peace and order to the colony. Later, blockade runners during the American Civil War made Nassau highly prosperous; and still later came another boom when Nassau was a leading base for rum runners during Prohibition. But the most significant event in the recent history of the islands took place in 1859, when the Crown granted Samuel Cunard a subsidy for a monthly mail service between New York and Nassau. This marked the beginning of Nassau's basic industry — the tourist trade.

The Bahamas today have a population of about sixty thousand. Nassau itself has twenty thousand. The native-born Bahamian is called a "conch," after the shellfish which has always been an important item in the diet of the islands. The "conch" is generally a leisurely fellow, whose temperament stems from the healthy, warm climate, love of the sea, and the somewhat easy living he finds in an economy based on a luxury tourist trade.

Sponge fishing, once an industry of great importance to the islands, has declined. The only substantial export trades still remaining are straw plaiting of colorful summer hats and bags and shipbuilding, mostly of pleasure yachts.

(Continued on page vii)

SAN DIEGO
Calling
SAN DIEGO, the most fascinating spot in this hemisphere! Where the skies are friendly and warm... the people, too. Where Nature, like Woman, charms with her infinite variety. If you like tropic blooms and shrubs . . . rugged coastlines with sheltered, sun-drenched beaches . . . snowy peaks sloping down to flowered deserts . . . historic scenes, scattered bits of yesterday in the peaceful life of today . . . this is your place. Come soon!
FREE BOOKLET
Address . . . Room No. 419 San Diego California Club

SAN DIEGO *In Southern* CALIFORNIA

CONSULT YOUR TRAVEL AGENT

ASK ABOUT NEW RAIL RATES

A Famous Spa

...IN AMERICA

Far from European tribulations, amid the tonic beauty of the Finger Lakes region, is the famous Glen Springs Hotel and its radioactive Nauheim Baths and mineral springs. Come here for the re-creation of mental serenity, physical vigor and spiritual happiness. Delicious food, fresh from our own farms. Excellent golf and miles of delightful walking trails on our 1,000 acre estate. Open the year 'round. Selected clientele. 50th Season.

Wm. M. Leffingwell, *President*

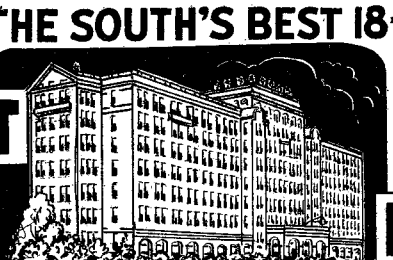
THE Glen Springs HOTEL

Watkins Glen, N.Y.

New York Office: 630 Fifth Ave.—CIrcle 5-8199

GOLF ON THE SOUTH'S BEST 18-HOLE COURSE

FOREST HILLS HOTEL



GOLF WITHOUT STEEP HILLS (At Hotel Door) FREE TO WEEKLY GUESTS

FIREPROOF····300 ROOMS

U.S. 1 FROM THE EAST

U.S. 25 FROM THE WEST

Average 337 Sunshiny Days Yearly

Weekly Guests Enjoy Horseback Riding Without Charge

Excellent Tennis — Quail Shooting — Skeet

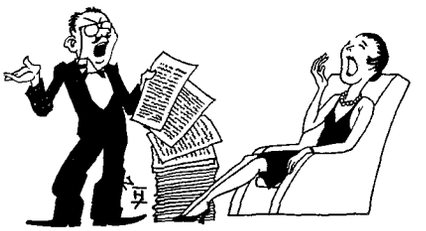
NOW OPEN

SELECTIVE CLIENTELE

AUGUSTA, Georgia

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WANTED:
ARMCHAIR EDITORS

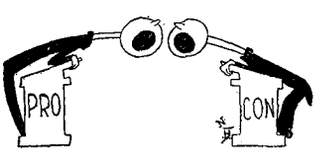


Will you help us by being an armchair editor for just five minutes? We should appreciate your thoughtfulness in making just seven check marks in answer to the three questions below and returning them to us as soon as possible.

1. Which of these regular or occasional FORUM departments do you regularly read and enjoy most?

"The Book Forum" (individual book reviews) .....
"Life and Literature," by Mary M. Colum .....
"The Artist's Point of View," by Ralph M. Pearson .....
"The Theatre," by Leta Clews Cromwell .....
"Our Rostrum" — letters from readers .....
"The Record Review" — notes on phonograph records .....
"The Forum Quiz," by Jo Chamberlin .....
"Travel Briefs" — suggestions on where to go .....
"A Page for Poets," conducted by the Editor .....

2. Do you like a debate in each issue or only occasionally?



3. Of the following different kinds of FORUM articles which ones do you regularly read and enjoy most?

Articles on American government, on politics and politicians .....
Articles on American social conditions (education, living conditions, occupations and amusements, American cities) .....
Articles on economics (industries, government-&-business) .....
Articles on foreign affairs (the war, diplomacy, people in other countries)
Articles about interesting or important people, "personality sketches" ..
Articles of personal experience, about other people's problems .....
Articles on personal psychology, how to be happy in life .....
Articles of scientific interest .....

Thank you, Mr. Editor, for your trouble. If you have any further remarks or suggestions, we'd be delighted to have you send them to us. They will be gratefully acknowledged by

THE EDITORS

Please indicate your choices in the spaces below, tear on dotted line, and return to THE FORUM, 570 Lexington Avenue, New York, N. Y.

CHOICES

	First	Second	Third
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐

Check here

Each Issue	Occasionally
☐	☐

Check here the types of articles you enjoy most in order of preference.

	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐

Fill this out, IF YOU CARE TO:

Name .....

Occupation .....

Address (City and State) .....

.....

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SPECIAL FEATURES

OUT-OF-PRINT and HARD-TO-FIND BOOKS supplied; also family and town histories, magazine back numbers, etc. All subjects, all languages. Send us your list of wants — no obligation. We report promptly. Lowest prices. (*We Also Buy Old Books and Magazines.*)
AMERICAN LIBRARY SERVICE
117 W. 48th Street Dept. F New York

MANUSCRIPTS MARKETED
Fiction, Articles, Books. Collaboration on percentage. Play Dept. in charge David A. Balch, author Broadway plays, former editor of *True Story*, associate editor the *American Magazine*. Poetry Dept. in charge Lucia Trent and R. Cheyney, former editors *Poetry World*, etc. Describe your material. NEW YORK PUBLISHING SERVICE, Literary Agents, 545 Fifth Ave., N. Y. C.

POETRY Book length manuscripts, wanted by New York publishing house for publication on cooperative, royalty basis. Confidential. Box S, Forum & Century, 570 Lexington Avenue, New York, N. Y.

RALPH M. PEARSON'S
MAIL STUDY COURSES IN MODERN ART.
Practice in creative painting, modeling, drawing. Analysis of current modern works. Bulletin on request. 288 Piermont Avenue, Nyack, New York.

SALARIED POSITIONS
MEN $2,500 to $15,000 WOMEN
Our confidential system (hiding your identity) works for you; serves to increase your salary; promotes you for high salaried executive positions at moderate cost; if you have earned $2,500 or more, can prove it, write for valuable information. No. 37. Executive's Promotion Service, Washington, D. C.

IS EPILEPSY INHERITED? CAN IT BE CURED?
A booklet containing the opinions of famous doctors on this interesting subject will be sent FREE, while they last, to any reader writing to the Educational Division, 535 Fifth Avenue, Dept. FC-2, New York, N. Y.

Make your CONVERSATION pay dividends!

● Your personality is judged by your *everyday* conversation. Whatever you say *can* and *always should* reflect your real abilities. Are you sure *you* make a good impression every time you talk?
● In your conversation lies the opportunity for social and business advancement —new friendships—new contacts—popularity—promotion—*in short,* SUCCESS.
● You may have this booklet FREE. It describes in detail a simple and practical method for self-training in conversation —*in your own home.*
● This unique method is heartily endorsed by leading educators.
● Acquire ease and skill in *conversation.* This booklet tells you how. Mail coupon or write to Conversation Institute, Dept. 1162, 3601 Michigan Blvd., Chicago, Ill.

Conversation Institute
Dept. 1162, 3602 Michigan Boulevard
Chicago, Illinois, U. S. A.
Please send me your *free* booklet "Adventures in Conversation."

*Name*_____
*Address*_____
*City*_____ *State*_____

THE BOOK FORUM

Conducted by Eleanor Van Alen

SUFFERANCE IS THE BADGE by Abram Leon Sachar (Knopf, $3.50).

Dr. Sachar, in a book born as it necessarily must be of deep emotion but remarkably objective throughout, weaves the contemporary history — the bitter recent history — of the Jewish people into the fabric of the turbulent, disjointed modern world.

In dramatic cadences and a smoothly flowing style, the author describes the vicious circle in which the Jews, like other minorities which have trekked their weary way down the ages, seem to be caught. Expelled from Palestine in A.D. 70, they are still the "unlike" in the midst of social groupings which, in a majority, have adopted particular patterns of existence. Latent in every social system there is a dislike for the unlike; when economic stress is severe and nationalism, as a consequence, runs riot, dislike flames into suspicion, then hatred. Finally, when it is stimulated by groups which hope to profit, the rancor becomes active persecution.

Dr. Sachar cites the remark of the Roman writer, Tertullian:

"If the Tiber rose to the walls of the city; if the inundation of the Nile failed to give the fields enough water; if the heavens did not send rain; if an earthquake occurred; if famine threatened; if pestilence raged; the cry resounded: 'Throw the Christians to the lions!'"

That human nature and human "logic" have not changed in a thousand years the author demonstrates conclusively in a panorama of human suffering and prejudice covering most of the "civilized" nations of the earth. Only, it is not the Christians who are fed to the lions of these tragic times. It is the Jews.

In a scene of deepening gloom, distinguished largely by the onrush of the forces of barbarism, Dr. Sachar finds, however, that one hopeful factor remains "to keep the heart whole." This is the growing conviction of responsible leadership that the assault on Jewish life is merely the opening wedge of the assault on freedom and religion in general, on liberty and decent living standards, on reason and the scientific spirit — in other words, on Western civilization. More and more the realization grows that the destiny of the Jewish people is bound up with the fate of the democratic West, and the author cites one notable instance where this thought has been translated into action, namely, when President Roosevelt, in 1938, invited thirty-two nations to meet and consult at Evian, France, on ways and means of assisting the persecuted minorities.

After two brilliant chapters on Palestine and an able analysis of the Jewish role in the United States, Dr. Sachar concludes with an appeal to his people to display, while awaiting the return of sanity, strength and courage and patience and pride; for, in the ringing words of Shylock, which have given the title to this book:

"Still have I bourne it with a patient shrug
For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe."

Sufferance Is the Badge merits a prominent place on the historical bookshelf of our time. It is comprehensive, pungent, and highly readable.

ROBERT PELL

PERSONAL RECORD, by Julian Green, translated by Jocelyn Godefroi (Harper, $3.00).

"Who shall say that all our waking life was not a dream?" Thus Julian Green closes the collection of his intimate impressions, spanning the years 1928 to 1939.

We are no longer surprised to read a work by Green, presented to us in translation. One of the great stylists of the modern novel in France, Green has chosen the language of the land of his birth. An American, born and educated in Paris, he feels happy and at ease with the French language, a vehicle he uses as comfortably as his everyday clothes.

The shell of the great mansion, the inbred moral decay of tradition is the only fitting stage for the characters of his twilight world. His two years at the University of Virginia, after years in Paris, seem to have kindled a latent spark of his Southern Americanism. This has left an indelible trace on all his thought. He never forgets the misty oak forests, dark-hung with moss and only occasionally pierced with daggers of light — the great tidewater plantations of his ancestors, near Savannah. His is the almost surrealist recreation of an aristocracy intellectually reborn for a day. His haunting descriptions of great old houses, black on white, are remote with the all-pervading feeling of topless, dusty gray stairs.

Avoiding the political scene and its unsettling influence, Green takes his reader on a penetrating voyage through the anxious 'thirties. For one who can

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Book Forum

appreciate them, these fragments of what was once a lengthier journal represent the sum of acute sensory experience in the fields of art, music, and literature — in fact, in all the purely cultural activities of an evanescent civilization.

Flaubert has contributed a sense of style; from the Russians and Dickens and, above all, from Balzac Green draws his presentation of characters.

However, it is that other strange American genius, Poe, who has the greatest influence on the spirit of Julian Green, an author who is living the reply to Poe's "Is all that we see or seem but a dream within a dream?"

H. Gregory Thomas

The Reconquest of Mexico, by Nathaniel & Sylvia Weyl (Oxford, $3.50).

Mrs. Morton of Mexico, by Arthur Davison Ficke (Reynal & Hitchcock, $2.50).

No matter how sanguine your hopes for social advance in Mexico, you could probably do with a few more facts about that land and about Cardenas, leader of Mexico's evolutionary revolution. Just how important he is and how fundamental his reforms can be learned with a minimum of wading through the customary freshets of sociological data from *The Reconquest of Mexico*. Patterning after the sober collaboration of Beatrice and Sidney Webb, the Weyls have added their own emphasis on color and on the human and vivid.

Although sympathetic with Cardenas, they have avoided tiresome propaganda on behalf of their singular hero. Facts, careful interpretations, and vigorous firsthand observation are their only concern. What is the real story about the confiscation of the oil properties? They tell it frankly and well. Are the Mexicans lazy or inferior? The answer to this is the hard-headed reply of social scientists who pooh-pooh the myth of racial inferiority but admit the debilitating effect of disease and malnutrition arising from a backward economy.

As war in Europe sends American businessmen hastening into Latin America, they will wonder again and again whether Mexico is a safe place in which to invest; whether the old round of petty revolutions will jeopardize their interests or a new round of socialistic revolutions annihilate them. Holding no brief for the would-be investors, the Weyls nevertheless do answer some of their questions too. The socialism of Cardenas and his famed missionary schoolteachers is apparently better called liberalism. Crisp, to-the-point information, not only on controversial issues but on places and people, makes their book a useful guide to the *de facto* traveler and the mildly curious armchair tourist as well.

After such hearty fare, *Mrs. Morton of Mexico* is strictly caviar — though, for all that, not to be taken lightly. Perhaps the things in this novel of Mr. Ficke's never happened; perhaps his Mrs. Morton is sheer inspiration — at any rate he has achieved a blend of reality and fiction that should charm even the hardened fact finder. Except for a hesitant and badly manufactured first chapter, the story moves with ease and grace. We suspect that, oddly enough, the Weyls might agree with the conclusions of this legendary old lady after her adventures among the politicos, the peasants, the worst and most delightful of Mexicans.

Mary L. Elting

Arts and the Man, *A Short Introduction to Aesthetics*, by Irwin Edman (Norton, $1.75).

"A healthy art," writes the philosopher not on holiday, "is one in which there is no divorce between end and means, no split between the instrumental and the beautiful." If the essay can be called an art form, his book of essays, *Arts and the Man*, is certainly in a healthy state, for it fuses effectively the instrumental and the beautiful. It is a useful instrument, an introduction to art and philosophy that sends the reader to art itself, and it is written with a quiet lucidity and sincere love of beauty that give it the repose and balance and some of the perspective and refreshing quality of art itself.

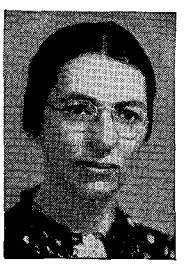
The six essays (five reprinted from an earlier book, one added) deal with the "intensification and clarification of experience" which is the province of art and its relation to philosophy and to civilization. Mr. Edman's analysis of art as a flight from life is urbane, tolerant, and persuasive. His distinctions between the fine arts and the merely useful or industrial have singular pertinence not only in evaluating the moral dignity and importance of the fine arts but also in relating the useful to daily living of the good life. His specific considerations of poetry and fiction, of painting, the plastic arts, and music are sympathetic and singularly free of esoteric terminology. They could, it seems to me, have dealt more concretely with technique and structure and been more specifically illustrated.

But it is in the new chapter, on art and philosophy, that the author succeeds most admirably and most vibrantly in making alive and real the relation between his two interests. "The artist is concerned with the face of beauty; the philosopher with the anatomy of truth," he says, and by

To People who want to write *but can't get started*

Do you have the constant urge to write but the fear that a beginner hasn't a chance? Then listen to what Fulton Oursler, editor of Liberty, has to say on the subject:

"There is more room for newcomers in the writing field today — and especially in Liberty Magazine — than ever before. Some of the greatest of writing men and women have passed from the scene in recent years. Who will take their places? Who will be the new Robert W. Chambers, Edgar Wallace, Rudyard Kipling, and many others whose work we have published? It is also true that more people are trying to write than ever before, but talent is still rare and the writer still must learn his craft, as few of the newcomers nowadays seem willing to do. Fame, riches and the happiness of achievement await the new men and women of power."



"I have sold, up to date, nineteen features to the Detroit Free Press and have been made their correspondent here," writes Mrs. Leonard Sanders of 1432 Putnam Ave., Detroit, Mich., on completing the N.I.A. course. Her skilful handling of feature stories was the reason given by the editor for her appointment. Mrs. Sanders' first feature was sold less than four months after she enrolled with N.I.A.

THE Newspaper Institute of America offers a free Writing Aptitude Test. Its object is to discover new recruits for the army of men and women who add to their income by fiction and article writing.

The Writing Aptitude Test is a simple but expert analysis of your latent ability, your powers of imagination, logic, etc. Not all applicants pass this test. Those who do are qualified to take the famous N.I.A. course based on the *practical* training given by big metropolitan dailies.

This is the New York Copy-Desk Method which teaches you to write by writing! You develop your *individual* style instead of trying to copy that of others.

You "cover" actual assignments such as metropolitan reporters get. Although you work at home, on your own time, you are constantly guided by experienced newspaper men.

It is really fascinating work. Each week you see new progress. In a matter of months you can acquire the coveted "professional" touch. Then you're ready for market with greatly improved chances of making sales.

Mail the Coupon Now

But the first step is to take the Writing Aptitude Test. It requires but a few minutes and costs nothing. So mail the coupon now. Make the first move towards the most enjoyable and profitable occupation — writing for publication! Newspaper Institute of America, One Park Avenue, New York.

Free

Newspaper Institute of America
One Park Avenue, New York

Send me, without cost or obligation, your Writing Aptitude Test and further information about writing for profit as promised in Forum, February.

Miss
Mrs. } .....
Mr.

Address .....

(All correspondence confidential. No salesmen will call on you.) 10B660

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Primarily concerned with the conduct of the honeymoon and with the technic of the sexual performance." — Hygeia (*published by the American Medical Association*).

You are invited to read this book without buying it!

This sensational offer enables you to see for yourself whether this is ***the sex instruction book you have always wanted!*** Yes, you can read it free, then return it without embarrassment, or red tape! Thousands of men and women like yourself will take advantage of this unusual offer to read THE SEX TECHNIQUE IN MARRIAGE. The result will be happier married love-life. The sexual side of marriage becomes a thrilling adventure when Dr. Hutton's Sex Technique rules are followed.

Written in Plain Words

Now, at last, you can read THE SEX TECHNIQUE IN MARRIAGE and ***learn the knack*** of making the sexual relation joyful, harmonious and satisfying — ***as it can and should be.*** In plain, simple words, the author-doctor tells both man and wife ***exactly what each must do*** for the other, to insure happy marriage.

Tells What to Do Before, During and After

Step by step Dr. Hutton reveals in detail what to do before, during and after married sex relations. This book can work a miracle in YOUR married life as it is now doing for thousands of other couples! Can you imagine being invited to read this great book, without having to buy it? Well, here is your chance! Simply return the coupon. ACT NOW! ***This offer may never be made again!***

ACCEPT THIS INVITATION!

Send this coupon NOW, to your bookseller, or to

Emerson Books, Inc., Dept. 29-B
251 West 19th Street, New York City

I accept your invitation to read "Sex Technique in Marriage" for 10 days. Upon arrival of book in plain wrapper, I will pay $2.00, and few cents delivery charge. If I want my money back after reading, I will return book within 10 days and you will refund purchase price. (I am over 21 years old.)

Name.....

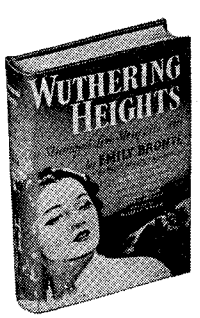
Address.....

☐ CHECK HERE if you wish to enclose only $2.00 with coupon, thus saving delivery charges. **Same money-back guarantee, of course.**

BEST SELLERS

Now

39¢ EACH



A miracle of modern publishing! Full-size library editions, bound in cloth, at a new low price. Take your pick now.

1. Brinkley Manor — *P. G. Wodehouse*
2. Wuthering Heights — *Emily Brontë*
3. The Exile — *Pearl S. Buck*
4. The Hurricane — *Nordhoff and Hall*
5. A Jew in Love — *Ben Hecht*
6. The Last Trail — *Zane Grey*
7. The Light That Failed — *Rudyard Kipling*
8. Millie — *Donald H. Clarke*
9. Of Mice and Men — *John Steinbeck*
10. Self-Made Woman — *Faith Baldwin*
11. Tish — *Mary R. Rinehart*
12. Broad Highway — *Jeffery Farnol*

All 12 for only $4.68

FORUM PUBLISHING CO.
570 Lexington Ave., New York, N. Y.

Please send me the books whose numbers I have encircled below. I am enclosing $.....

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Name.....

Address.....

City.....*State*.....

The Book Forum

his own analysis shows them as skeleton and flesh of one spirit.

Mr. Edman has modestly called his book "an introduction to aesthetics" and has suited his style to his purpose. Unlike many writers on art, he recognizes that "what the arts reveal of deeper being can only be said by the arts, each in his own tongue." He does not therefore attempt to write like a poet, a painter, or even a wit. He writes simply and enthusiastically, gives lucid and workable definitions, avoids technical jargon, and never forgets his audience — man, not museums.

MILDRED BOIE

TARHEEL EDITOR, by Josephus Daniels (North Carolina, $3.50).

History, complained Mr. Dooley, is a post-mortem examination. It tells you what a country died of. "But," he adds, "I'd like to know what it lived of."

In this fat, substantial book Josephus Daniels offers not only autobiography but something of Mr. Dooley's favorite kind of history. He tells — sometimes in almost overwhelming detail — what the post-Civil War South "lived of." Before Mr. Daniels was thirty he had edited three newspapers, had taken part in the struggle of Reconstruction politics in a small North Carolina town, had fought his share of journalistic battles with railroads and trusts. If the pattern of this success story is a familiar one, the stitching is pleasantly original. Without a great show of candor, Mr. Daniels has written a book that the careful reader will find revealing not only of the rising young politician himself but of his many associates. "If there were no giants in those days," he says, "there were men in them moving already to shape this century in which we live today." So ends the first volume of four that will deal with larger and more immediate things. This is plainly the book of his heart, akin to the photograph albums of other days, as American as the cracker barrel.

M. L. E.

BUT YOU ARE YOUNG, by Josephine Lawrence (Little, Brown, $2.50).

Sinclair Lewis has compared Miss Lawrence to Balzac in that she selects her people from middle-class America as he did from the French bourgeoisie. She puts vin ordinaire into new bottles. It is but natural that the author of *Main Street* should admire the author of *If I Have Four Apples* who is now the creator of Kelsie Wright, New Jersey manicurist who wanted in the worst and most humble way to get married, to be domestic and loved. For both novelists, you see, find in main streets or back streets, the inarticulateness, the frustrations, that are to them symbolic of American life. Both too are moralists when they write social studies. But, unlike W. Somerset Maugham, whose craftsmanship must not be mentioned in the same sentence, they are moralists inveighing against economic conditions or sociological situations, not moralizing about human character.

But You Are Young seems to state quite explicitly, in the story's telling, two cases against the American Way — one directed at working wives with working husbands, the other aimed at a system or lack of it that hopelessly stands in the way, more than often, of young, decent people who want marriage and babies. Like the pictures of the modernist painter, Sheeler, Miss Lawrence's literary interiors and façades, have a realism that is positively clinical in their scientific presentation of detail, their pitiless daylighting. However "thesistic," she tells a story with suspense. She is most gifted as a satirist — for instance when scalding with deft penmanship the heartless sisters-in-law of Kelsie, her Cinderella.

Josephine Lawrence exemplifies the rightness of the advice of all professionals to young writers: to write of what they know. Miss Lawrence, whatever the artistic merit of her book, has not been a newspaperwoman in Newark all these years to no avail.

SOMETIME NEVER, by Clare Leighton (Macmillan, $3.50).

The famous woodcut artist and author of *Country Matters*, etc., illustrates with symbolical lithographs this reverie of a dreamer "who lives forever," as the old jingle has it, "while a thinker dies in a day." As a writer she is an incurable romantic and writes poetic prose, abundant in sensory images, about her moods and impressions of Virginia cornfields, cypress swamps, English meadows, July in Majorca. This is a paean to nature by an aesthete often too kaleidoscopic to be followed lucidly. The magic of the little book, however, lies in its constant evocation of parallel pictures in the mind's eye of the reader.

E. V. A.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TOASTS

WILLIAM OLIVER STEVENS' previous appearance in THE FORUM was in November, 1938, when "Our Yes-Man Navy" attacked the existing system of naval promotions. Mr. Stevens was a teacher at the United States Naval Academy for twenty-one years, during which time he collaborated in writing a *History of Sea Power*, still used there as a textbook. Now retired, he is engaged in writing a series of books on old American towns.

AUDREY GRANNEBERG, a student of and writer on social and racial problems, lives in Takoma Park, Maryland. She has contributed to numerous magazines, sometimes in collaboration with her writer husband, Selden Menefee.

COURTNEY RYLEY COOPER, one-time circus clown, newspaper writer, and press agent, is one of the most prolific writers of magazine articles, short stories and books extant. In the last few years he has specialized in interpreting the work of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

ALBERT BRANDT'S "Germany Rearms," in THE FORUM for January, 1934, was the first American magazine article to give a substantial account of the Nazis' remilitarization. Mr. Brandt, a pacifist since his service in the last war, was educated in Germany and came to this country after Hitler came to power in the Reich.

JO HUBBARD CHAMBERLIN, a free-lance writer who has also been newspaperman and editor, lives in New York City.

MARY M. COLUM, literary and dramatic critic, is teaching this winter at Columbia University.

R. HAVELOCK-BAILIE, after the Ozark farm he describes in "A Country Boy Goes Home" began paying dividends, took up writing and later became editor of a pictorial magazine. But office and typewriter didn't wear well for him, and when last heard from he was headed again for the hills.

ROBERT P. TRISTRAM COFFIN, the distinguished poet of Down East, is Professor of English at Bowdoin College.

ROBERT MONAGHAN, a native New Englander, describes himself as "a loving student of such diversified Americana as light harness racing and heavy rackets." A resident of Westchester County, New York, he is a public-relations consultant and a former newspaperman.

RICHARD G. HUBLER, once a student pilot in the army air corps, has done newspaper and feature writing and is now on the editorial staff of *Newsweek*.

RALPH M. PEARSON, student and teacher of modern design in the arts and crafts, is the founder of the Design Workshop.

Nassau

(*Continued from page i*)

Nassau is sufficiently different from any American resort to add a dash to its gay social life. Physically, it has all the attributes essential to a tropical resort. It has its own artesian water supply. Its temperature in summer rarely goes above 86 and in winter seldom below 67. The water is perfect for swimming, and Nassau has more perfect beaches within its limited area than any other spot on earth. Many world travelers say that Paradise Beach, on Hog Island — which forms, with the mainland, the harbor of Nassau — is the finest beach in the world.

Numerous excellent guest houses and hotels have become noted for their cuisine and service. The British Colonial Hotel, largest in the West Indies, is on the site of old Fort Nassau. The Fort Montagu Hotel has a private beach, as have all the leading hotels. The Shoreham, which has a pool, and the Rozelda are smaller apartment hotels. The Royal Victoria is the favorite of many older patrons, who enjoy its wide verandas overlooking the harbor. Yachtsmen make the Prince George Hotel their headquarters.

Nassau is a year-round sporting center. Tennis stars from the United States and Europe play in the tournaments on club courts. The Miami-Nassau ocean race is a major event bringing out the top skippers of America. Polo is a weekly attraction, and professional and amateur golfers mingle on the eighteen-hole course of the Bahamas Country Club.

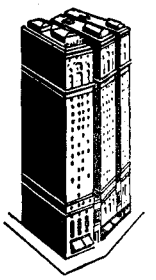
Yachting is the most popular sport. Club races are weekly features of the Nassau Yacht Club and Royal Nassau Sailing Club. Racing is in the Flamingo class; also, Nassau is host at the spring championship series of the International Star Class (March, this year).

The Bahamas are a great game-fishing area. Bimini, where giant marlin, swordfish, and tuna abound, has become a world center for this thrilling sport.

Nassau's charm is in its way of living — a carefree, unhurried tempo which captivates the visitor. The social life of the colony during its winter season is one of the gayest in the West Indies; the harbor fills with yachts and the hotels are centers for crowds of smart sojourners from America, England, and the Continent.

How do you get there? By steamship, from Miami or New York. By plane, from Miami. From any point east of the Mississippi, you can reach Nassau in forty hours or less.

Nassau has removed regulations on American passports, visas, and currency. The last is British, of course, but the rate of exchange has been stabilized to eliminate day-to-day fluctuations, for the benefit of tourists. This winter Nassau is having its most successful and gayest tourist season in years.



"A GREAT HOTEL" IN NEW YORK

The Hotel McAlpin fulfills all the requirements of the visitor in New York—whether one is here strictly on a business trip or merely to see the shows and sights — or both. Because of its "center of the city" location it is only a matter of several minutes to reach any section of the city. One block from Penn Station and Empire State Building.

LARGE ROOMS, NEWLY FURNISHED & DECORATED
SINGLE *from* $3. DOUBLE $4.50

HOTEL McALPIN

BROADWAY AT 34th ST., NEW YORK
Under KNOTT Management
JOHN J. WOELFLE, *Manager*

BOOKS That Add to the Pleasures of TRAVEL

DON'T spend days and needless money in tiresome search. Don't miss the joys of your vacation or travels — just because you are unfamiliar with your surroundings!

Only $1 to $1.98

You can know in ADVANCE by simply choosing from the books listed below. They will tell you all about the countryside, the famous landmarks, the people and their customs. They will enable you to make your budget go further, enable you to get more real pleasure — by acquainting you intimately with your destination before you even leave home! Which of these beautifully illustrated travel books do you want at these bargain prices?

G-149 — Crossroads of the Caribbean — *Hendrik de Leeuw*.....$1
B-187 — Around the World in Eleven Years — *Abbe Children*.....$1
B-45 — Skyward — *Richard E. Byrd*.....$1
B-8 — Tidewater Maryland — *Paul M. Wilstach*.....$1
B-52 — Tidewater Virginia — *Paul M. Wilstach*.....$1
G-350 — New York Beautiful — *Wallace Nutting*.....$1.98
G-358 — Texas the Marvelous — *Nevin O. Winter*.....$1.98
G-334 — Maine Beautiful — *Wallace Nutting*.....$1.98
G-447 — Sea Lanes — *Martin Stevers and Capt. J. Pendlebury*.....$1.59
G-361 — Vermont Beautiful — *Wallace Nutting*.....$1.98

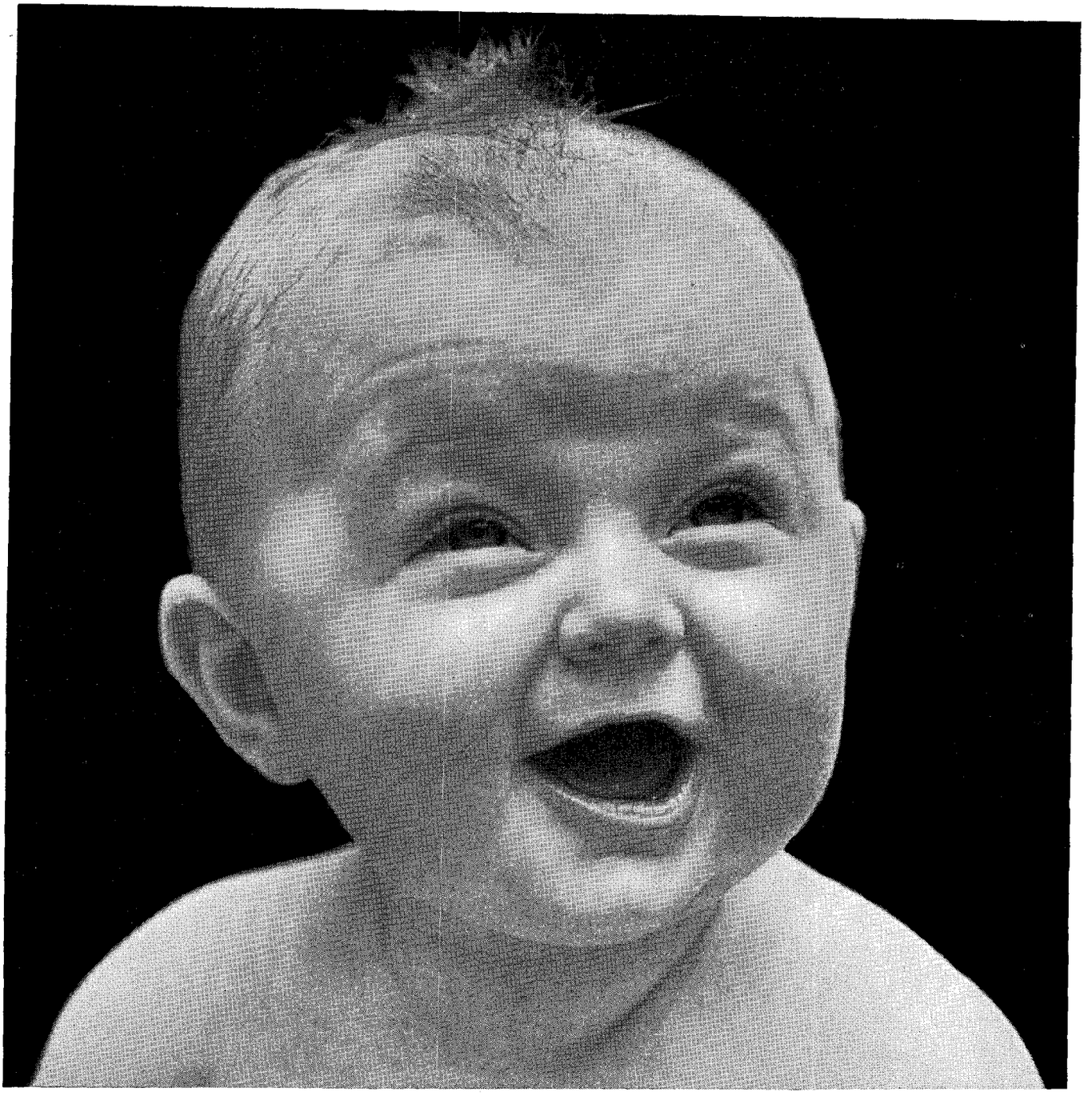
ORDER BY NUMBER

Send no money. Just write the numbers of the books you wish on a penny postcard with your name and address, and mail at once. On delivery pay postman amount due, plus few cents postage. It is understood that if you are not satisfied with your selection you may return the book (s) within 5 days and receive your money back. POSTAGE FREE — We pay postage and packing charges if you send full amount for books with your order. Same refund guarantee applies, of course.

Prices higher outside territorial U. S. A.

THE FORUM, 570 Lexington Ave., N.Y.C.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



"YOU'RE TELLING ME!"

"That's a funny one. You're telling me what a great thing the telephone is. As if I didn't know!

"Why, I'm one of the main reasons there's a telephone in our house. For you can bet your life I keep the folks pretty busy around here.

"Just think! If we didn't have a telephone, we couldn't order things in a hurry from the stores. And Grandma couldn't call up to ask if I had a tooth. And Daddy couldn't talk to us when he's out of town. And Mother would be tied down just something awful.

"And suppose one of us suddenly took sick? Or there was a fire? Or a robber, maybe? Well, I don't worry about those things when I see the telephone.

"Doesn't cost much either, my Daddy says. And Mother says, 'I don't know what I'd do without it.' "

BELL TELEPHONE SYSTEM

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

F O R U M
and Century

FEBRUARY, 1940 VOL. CIII, NO. 2

What Has Happened to Sea Power?

by **WILLIAM OLIVER STEVENS**

At the opening of our Civil War, *Punch* printed a cartoon by John Tenniel, showing the North and the South as two gladiators in an arena. The South was represented by a warrior with helmet, shield, and sword; the North, by a man armed only with net and trident. There was significance in that, for those last two emblems typified naval power: it was the North that had the fleet. After the war ended, Tenniel drew another cartoon of the same arena and the same gladiators, but this time the man with the trident stood victorious over his prostrate foe.

About fifty years ago, this idea of the importance of sea power was developed at length by an American naval captain, Alfred Thayer Mahan, in a book called *The Influence of Sea Power on History*. This work created a sensation. Mahan rendered a real service by stressing something that most historians, being landlubbers, tended to overlook — namely, the importance of controlling the sea in time of war.

This point fell in perfectly with the historic British policy of having the world's largest navy, and naturally was applauded by big-navy advocates here. Both Oxford and Cambridge conferred on Mahan an honorary degree, and writers on both sides of the Atlantic, with rare exceptions, chimed in the chorus of praise. Mahan's idea soon became a doctrine. For the rest of his life, he continued to develop his thesis in a succession of further books and essays.

The British and the Americans, however, were not the only ones to read *The Influence of Sea Power*. The German Kaiser saw it, and was tremendously impressed. He ordered every German naval officer to buy, read, and inwardly digest this work. If sea power had meant so much in the rise of the British Empire, why shouldn't Germany profit by it? So far the Prussians had got along famously without any sea power at all, but now "our future," exclaimed the Kaiser, "lies on the sea!" So out of the pages of Mahan sprang the new German fleet of the first decade of this century and the consequent race in naval armament with Great Britain. In vain the English called for a naval "holiday." Mahan had never said a word about such a thing, and the Kaiser was going by the book. The im-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mediate result was to throw Britain into the arms of her traditional enemies, France and Russia, and the ultimate consequence was the World War.

All this was most unexpected and distressing to Mahan, who was an ardent Anglophile. It never occurred to him that building a huge navy was as much the right of one nation as of another and that it might bring grave political complications. In fact the realization of his own responsibility in bringing about Armageddon hastened his death in 1914.

Like every man with a pet idea, Mahan drove his into the ground. He strained some chapters of history to prove his point and ignored others. For example, in the Franco-Prussian War, the French had the second largest navy in the world, and the Prussians virtually none at all, but French sea power did nothing to halt the victorious sweep of the Prussian armies toward Paris.

Naval Power in the World War

However, such was the influence of Mahan that at the opening of the World War we confidently assumed that, since the Allies had an overwhelming advantage in sea power, they were bound to win and win quickly. Yet something went wrong. A weapon that British admirals had characterized as a "mere toy" — the submarine — suddenly became the terror of the Grand Fleet and the merchant marine alike. Despite the great preponderance of the British navy over the German — to leave the French out of account altogether — English coast towns knew what it was to be bombarded, while never a British shell was dropped on German soil. Thanks also to other new inventions, the bombing plane and the Zeppelin, London for the first time knew what it meant to have bombs bursting in her streets. Sea power could not stop that. And, as the war went on, the record of the Allied fleets grew more and more disappointing.

One of Mahan's favorite examples was the work of the Union navy during our Civil War, in which, by the way, he himself served as a midshipman. At the time Fort Sumter was fired on, the United States navy was scattered far and wide. Steadily, however, ships were assembled, built, or improvised for the task. A blockade of ever increasing effectiveness was laid along the entire coast line of the Confederacy. In addition, the navy, with or without army co-operation, captured Southern seaports and cleared rivers and harbors from Port Royal to New Orleans. Meanwhile, operating both north and south, the navy opened up the Mississippi, thus splitting the Confederacy in two. Certainly, the service of the Union navy in subduing the South was of prime importance. It was really sea power influencing history.

In comparison with that record, the story of Allied operations in the World War is not impressive. The British and French navies, for all their superiority of numbers, did not capture a single port on the enemy's coast, subdue a single fortress, capture or destroy one naval base, or open up any channel or body of water. The assault on Zeebrugge was brilliant but of no real effect. The Allies could not prevent the occupation and fortification of the Belgian coast under their very guns. They did not destroy the German fleet.

The British had one golden opportunity to do this, on May 31, 1916, when the Grand Fleet met the German High Seas Fleet in the North Sea off the Jutland peninsula. In this action the British had the advantage of strength reckoned as eight to five. They had also the advantage of position in that they stood between the Germans and their home ports. Yet the Germans inflicted twice as much damage as they sustained and cut through the British lines to reach home, exultant and proud, feeling that they had won at least a moral victory.

If the conditions that prevailed at Jutland were given in one of the games offered as problems at our War College, the only answer would be the annihilation of the weaker fleet. This battle of Jutland could have been a brilliant demonstration of the Mahan theory, if it had been the overwhelming victory we were all looking for. It might have been the turning point of the war. Instead it fizzled out into the greatest "might have been" in modern history.

The usual apology for the British failure to destroy the German fleet at Jutland is that the action amounted to the same thing as a complete victory because the Germans never came out again. But that is not true. In August of that same summer they made a sally into the North Sea without meeting their enemy. There-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

after it was deemed better strategy to concentrate on the submarine as the weapon that would do England the most harm. And that U-boat campaign came perilously near winning the war, as we still remember. Furthermore, the fact that the German fleet still existed chained the British navy to the North Sea to stand guard for the rest of the war. So much for the famous Battle of Jutland.

A year earlier, another attempt had been made by Allied sea power. This was the effort to force the Dardanelles with ships, as Farragut had done in the passes of the Mississippi and the entrance to Mobile Bay. But, having lost several old ships which ran on mines in the initial attack, the British admiral in command decided not to try again the next day. We know now that if he had advanced he would have won Constantinople with scarcely a shot. The Turks were out of ammunition, and a special train stood ready to carry the government officials and their German friends away to safety the moment the expected smoke of the Allied battleships was seen on the horizon. The prize tossed away on that occasion was never regained by the months of terrible slaughter that followed in what is called the Gallipoli campaign.

Of course there are some entries to be made on the credit side of the account. The sea was held for the transport of troops and supplies to France. And there was the blockade. This became more and more effective, especially after the United States entered the war. There is no question about the severity of the food pinch in Germany during the last six months of the war.

But a blockade doesn't win a war all by itself. It is interesting to try to see how the war would have ended if the United States had remained neutral. Even as things were, it was touch and go in that last year. Italy was only a liability; Russia had collapsed; Rumania was overrun. After the fruitless butcheries on the west front, there was mutiny in the French army. Women paraded the streets of Paris bearing placards that read RENDEZ-NOUS NOS SOLDATS! Then there was that crash through Gough's army on the west front. All the while, the submarine was sinking something like 800,000 tons of shipping a month.

Sea power or no sea power, nothing could have saved the Allies if they had been left to their own resources. So much for the record of the first World War.

THE BRITISH PLAY SAFE

TURNING NOW to the present war, we see a far greater preponderance of naval strength on the side of Britain and France than before. In 1914 the German fleet was second only to Britain's. Twenty-five years later the surface fleet under the swastika is so small as hardly to be worth considering in comparison. Just what is sea power doing now?

Entering the war because of a pledge to go to Poland's aid if she were attacked, Britain and France threw down the gage of battle. But, within eighteen days after the first German soldier set foot in Poland, the entire country was not so much defeated as pulverized — this, even before the Russian vulture swooped down to snatch his share of the corpse. In that "lightning" war, what were the accomplishments of the Allied navies? In round numbers, zero.

Of course we may as well leave the French out of account, because, in contrast with the French army, the French navy has done nothing worth mentioning in 150 years. Let us concentrate on the British. What might they be doing with their armada? Remember that they could afford to lose two thirds of their fleet and still be stronger than the German surface navy.

When the pledge was given to come to the aid of Poland, everyone knew there was only one possible route by which Poland's allies might reach Poland in force; that was by sea. In the time of the Napoleonic wars, British fleets did not hesitate to enter the Baltic and carry out bombardments of coastal cities, as Nelson did at Copenhagen. In this instance, Danzig lies on the seacoast. But, despite the frantic appeals of the Poles for help, the British fleet stayed in home waters. Not a single battleship ever appeared to hearten the Poles. Instead, one German man-of-war lay at ease offshore and bombarded the garrison of Westerplatte into surrender, undisturbed by any representative of British sea power. The German newsreel men got some fine pictures of her as she fired her guns.

Has any naval assault been made on Helgoland, Wilhelmshaven, or Kiel? No. Just what has been achieved by sea power to offset the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

devastating strokes of the *Blitzkrieg?* Up to date it has picked up German tramp steamers, sunk an indeterminate number of U-boats, covered the landing of an expeditionary force in France, and organized a blockade. Now, however, with Russia and Italy — especially Russia — as benevolent neutrals instead of enemies, it is doubtful just how effective that blockade is going to be. It is proving leaky in its own area. It did not capture the *New York* and the *Bremen*, which passed twice through the blockade area. It allowed the "pocket" battleships to come out and raid the oceans and could not prevent the Germans from mining the North Sea, even the very mouth of the Thames, where no enemy had been since the seventeenth century. One auxiliary British cruiser was shot to pieces in the very area the British navy is supposed to guard with full force.

Meanwhile the German underwater campaign has scored heavily. One of its victims was the airplane carrier *Courageous*, which was, at the time of the attack, theoretically screened from just this fate; another was the battleship *Royal Oak*, which lay at anchor inside Scapa Flow, presumably guarded by every known means. A cruiser also was struck in the Firth of Forth. And so it has gone. At the outset of the war, someone at the Admiralty made the cheery announcement that since 1918 the gadgets for discovering the presence of submarines had developed so much that the U-boat threat was largely removed. The story of the war to date has made that pronouncement ridiculous.

In a word, if the record of sea power in the first World War was disappointing, the story of the second is hardly more reassuring. What is wrong? Where is the old punch?

There are two possible explanations. One is the development of new instruments of warfare that neutralize the effectiveness of surface ships. The second is that strategy and tactics are now cautious where once they were bold. Perhaps both explanations are correct, and the second reason may be the result of the first, so that there is really one cause at bottom.

It is certainly true that the long-range coast-defense gun, the deep-sea mine, the submarine, and the airplane make the problem of surface navies far more complex than in our Civil War days. And, of these, it looks as though it is air power that has done most to push sea power into a secondary place. Despite the overwhelming superiority of the British fleet, it was the terror of what Germany's bombing planes might do in a sudden raid on London that, more than anything else, moved Chamberlain to agree to the historic and fateful surrender at Munich. It was still this dread, despite the feverish increase in the British air force, that caused the unprecedented evacuation of women and children from London. By contrast, Berlin did nothing of the kind. Germany has no fear of invasion from any quarter, because she has put her faith in strength by land and air.

It is certainly true also that, from the beginning of the World War, there developed a British naval policy of never taking chances with the battle fleet, of waiting always for the sure thing. This did not make for the great victories of the old days. As noted already, it was illustrated at the Dardanelles and at Jutland and, for that matter, throughout the entire war. There was nothing that suggested the methods of Horatio Nelson, no victory that remotely resembled Trafalgar. (In fact the Admiralty agreed at the outset of the war "not to try for another Trafalgar.") But Nelson was not the only commander at sea who did not mind taking chances to achieve great results. There was Francis Drake at Cadiz, Robert Blake at Teneriffe and Porto Farina, and, to touch American history, David Farragut in the Mississippi and Mobile Bay and George Dewey at Manila. However, it seems nowadays to have gone out of fashion to "damn the torpedoes." All the initiative, the offensive, has been surrendered to the vastly inferior German navy.

The Future of the Battleship

Whatever the reason, the ability to strike hard is the quality that has utterly vanished from sea power, if we may judge by both the World War and the conflict now in progress. Navies seem reduced to a purely defensive role — at least that appears to be the view of the British Admiralty.

Yet, if that is all that a fleet is good for in modern times, why did the British invest such colossal sums in line-of-battle ships? Of what use are they now in the European war? They had no power, evidently, to help stricken

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Poland. To the frantic calls for help from the radio announcer in Warsaw, the response from Britain was an assortment of kind sentiments uttered by the announcer of the British Broadcasting Corporation. It must have been a comfort to know that Britannia still ruled the air waves anyway. Her fleet guards the entrance to the Baltic but permits that sea to remain a German lake (except where the Russians have barged in), just as it did from 1914 to 1918. Those superdreadnoughts of the Grand Fleet cannot save the citizens of London from being bombed in their beds, and they are not adapted to cope with the submarine menace. They are apparently incapable of attacking enemy bases or capturing enemy ports. The work of maintaining the blockade and covering transports is better done by smaller vessels. Just what are these battleships for? Whom or what were they destined to fight? They cannot catch up with the German "pocket" battleships. It was fast cruisers that trapped the *Graf Spee*. Must the superdreadnoughts merely lie at anchor in Scapa Flow and wait to be bombed from the air or torpedoed from below?

Of course sea power still has its importance in protecting the ocean routes for such a nation as Great Britain, which is an island and has distant possessions. It still has great value as a shield. But the shield now has holes in it. The spectacle of every man, woman, and child in Britain, from King to scullery maid, going about with a gas mask over the shoulder is eloquent testimony to the fact that Englishmen are no longer safe behind the bulwarks of their navy as they were in the days when Napoleon was the threat and Nelson and Collingwood barred the way.

As a sword, at any rate, the glory of sea power has certainly departed. A new power, that of the air, is the aggressive, striking weapon. In this war, both British and German airplane squadrons have attacked the surface fleets of their enemies and bombed the naval bases. Both sides have shown daring and initiative. As yet the attempt to sink ships by aerial bombardment has not met with great success, but it is noteworthy that it is the air force that makes the attack, while the surface fleet lies passive. And, when ships are bombed from the air, they summon their own planes to their defense rather than depend on their antiaircraft guns alone. Airplanes are taking over some of the jobs of the fleets. Mines have been laid by air, and planes made an admirable convoy when the *Bremen* came safely home to Hamburg. At this writing, neither side has yet used its planes in full force, but that assault may come any day.

Of course, these considerations are based on the conditions that prevail in a European war. There the waters are narrow, and air bases near. The problem for the United States would be very different, for we are flanked by two great oceans. When and if it is our turn to fight with our backs to the wall, we shall still need battleship fleets for a long time to come, and we have faith that they will be put to a more active use than floating around a home base waiting to be torpedoed. Nevertheless, even in this hemisphere, the supremacy of the air may be a matter of only a few decades, and we should not be blind to the handwriting on the wall. The lesson seems to be that the ancient power of the sea is steadily giving ground before the new power of the air.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Elegant Indigence in BALTIMORE

by **AUDREY GRANNEBERG**

At the tidewater head of the Patapsco River, an estuary of Chesapeake Bay, is languid Baltimore. Except perhaps for Boston, she is the smuggest city in America. She has all the set conservatism of a pre–Civil War Southern town and flaunts one of the most blue-blooded aristocracies in the New World. She also tolerates a hundred thousand unblessed slum dwellers.

The social structure of Baltimore is frozen into a rigid caste system. Most glamorous of all the castes are the hereditary Brahmins who breathe rarefied air at the top of the social ladder. These are the horsy patricians who enter blue-ribbon nags in Baltimore's renowned Pimlico. They are also the patrons of the century-old Baltimore Bachelor's Cotillion. The Duchess of Windsor was born into this caste.

Only Charleston's St. Cecilia Ball can compare with the Cotillion as a faithful perpetuation of the old marriage-mart system of debuts. It is strictly limited to long established and proper families. Money alone is not enough, and seldom does the most expert maneuvering of the *nouveau riche* result in a bid to the ball. White-kid gloves are still compulsory for aristocratic gents attending the Cotillion. Each eager belle must be accompanied by an official chaperon, a senior escort, and a junior escort. Baltimore girls who don't receive one of the traditional last-minute surprise invitations cannot "come out," must forever remain social nobodies. The powerful Brahmins who run the Cotillion are absolute social dictators in Baltimore.

A wide gap separates the Brahmins from the merchant caste — the up-and-coming businessmen who build new brick houses in the spacious subdivisions. They don't make the Cotillion grade no matter how wealthy they are, no matter how big the yachts they own. This caste entertains in the drawing room, emerging therefrom only when a new play or opera comes to town. (Plays and operas are social events of staggering importance. The unbeatable combination for a terrific success is a Baltimore author and an absence of any "social significance.")

Wealthy Jewish merchants have built up their own social hierarchy. Baltimoreans don't admit to any strong anti-Semitism; yet the objective facts indicate that here, as in other American cities, there is a growing and dangerous racial intolerance. Jews are excluded from several residential districts. They do not meet gentiles socially. Their names never appear in society chatter columns. Last spring, newspapers all over the country headlined the branding of a Baltimore junior-high-school student by forty swastika-decked "Aryan" boys. The victim had an "H" slashed in his neck when he confessed to being Jewish. The attack took place in a predominantly German district, which was being encroached on by Jews.

The only social flux in Baltimore takes place within the middle class. This amorphous group ranges from professional families, in their neat "detached" houses on the outskirts, down to the countless inhabitants of brick-row houses on all the downtown streets. The latter are clerks, salesmen, secretaries — anonymous citizens whose women scrub their anonymous white steps every morning at nine.

The series of four railingless white steps jutting out before thousands of narrow red-brick houses are one of the unforgettable peculiarities of Baltimore. It makes one's senses reel to stand on a corner and see the endless rows of white steps stretching out in all four direc-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tions. Millions of tourists have remarked, "I pity the Baltimore drunk — imagine trying to find your own steps if you came home slightly potty."

When you walk abroad in the morning, you see long lines of women vigorously scrubbing their steps. It is about the only place in Baltimore where civic pride is expressed in action. The white steps are immaculate. In summer evening the bursting life of the town spills out on them. Neighborhood gossip, picnics, pickups, and courtships all take place on the steps.

There are several legends surrounding their origin. Probably the likeliest one is the most prosaic one: that nearby marble quarries, in the early days, provided the best source of step-building material. Baltimore lethargy explains the rest. For generations it simply never occurred to house builders to break away from the pattern. Today, in all the densely populated sections of town, the steps that aren't marble are white-painted stone or wood. They are somehow associated with social status in the minds of the "frayed white collar" and industrial workers. To be respectable, one must live in a street-front house and keep one's white steps spotlessly clean.

Huddled in the dismal alleys and in the crowded tenements next to the business district are Baltimore's thousands of white slum dwellers. They make up a caste whose only distinction from Negroes is the heritage of a pale epidermis.

The Negroes are the untouchables. And they are literally untouchable, irrevocably set off from all other castes by their badge of darkness.

II

CREEPING OLD AGE shows itself insidiously in Baltimore's cultural life — or lack of it. The sinister disease of senescence is gripping the townsfolk as well as the streets and buildings. Everywhere there is an urgent need for a stiff shot in the arm, and nobody to administer it.

Baltimore has a mediocre Municipal Symphony and two legitimate theatres, one or the other of which is always dark. Publishers rate the city as one of the worst book markets in the civilized world. Not one large or prosperous bookstore exists in the whole town of almost a million people! But pulp magazines have a brisk sale. Being brainy, as far as Baltimoreans are concerned, is strictly a monopoly of Johns Hopkins professors.

It was not always like this.

When George Peabody established the Peabody Conservatory of Music, in 1867, it was the first of its kind in the United States and a topnotcher for decades. Johns Hopkins University is still unsurpassed in many fields, especially in medicine. The beautiful Enoch Pratt Free Library remains a great tribute to the civic consciousness of its founder.

It isn't so much that these cultural centers have gone downhill as that they have stood still while others have come up and in many cases outdistanced them. Baltimore's millionaire philanthropists have done well by their town. The poor man contributes taxes to support the municipal orchestra and museum. But the wealthy merchants don't come through with the donations required for maintaining vigor in the endowed centers.

According to Gerald W. Johnson, veteran *Evening Sun* columnist, the philosophy faculty at Johns Hopkins hasn't received one substantial donation from Baltimore since 1876. The Peabody Conservatory has had only one gift of $10,000 since 1857. The Enoch Pratt Library used to have a book fund of $90,000 a year, which met the U. S. average. Now this is cut to $16,500.

Most ludicrous of all, famed Goucher College for Women sweats and gasps in the grime of downtown Baltimore, unable to move out to its long-held suburban property because of lack of moving funds! In 1939 a rescue squad was organized, in the form of an alumni committee that collected over $150,000 from all corners of the nation to save alma mater. The immensely complacent and sluggish citizens of Baltimore simply cannot generate sufficient vitality to keep their once glorious institutions alive.

The Municipal Art Museum is a rare exception to the general stagnation. In 1937 a new president was elected, a businessman named Henry Treide. He decided to apply "business principles" to art, giving Baltimoreans what they wanted instead of what uplifters thought they should have. To discover their wants, he organized representative committees. First to ask for a specific exhibit was the labor committee, and the museum promptly produced an

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

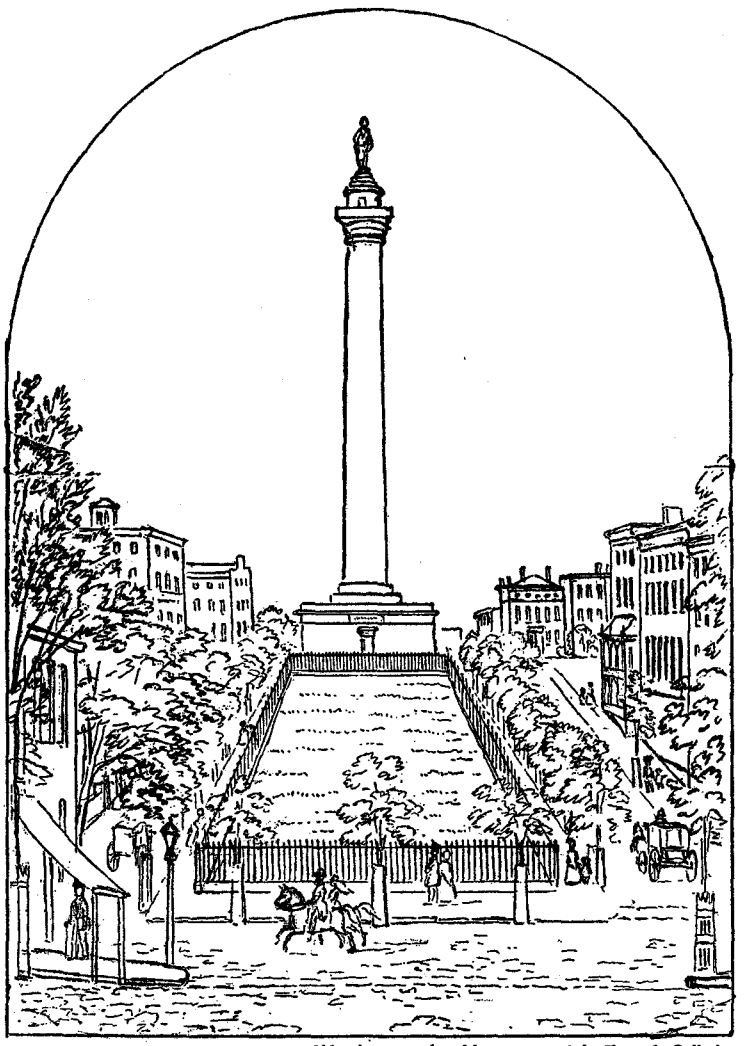
excellent exhibit of Labor in Art. Then, at the suggestion of the Negro committee, the museum staged the first large show of Negro art to appear in the South. "An art museum," says thirty-year-old director Leslie Cheek, Jr., "should be a place where people can have fun." Baltimoreans enjoy their museum and are rightly proud of it.

The city's cultural decline can be measured by the trends in her press. For seventy-five years Baltimore was celebrated for the *Sunpapers*. The pioneering, courageous *Morning Sun*, first printed in 1839, sired two lusty offspring: the *Evening Sun* and the *Sunday Sun*. The word *Sunpapers* is interchangeable with "newspapers" in Baltimore. The *Sunpapers* built up an international reputation for liberal fearlessness. And the bright-eyed, wide-grinning little man of the *Sunpapers*, H. L. Mencken, regularly shocked and delighted the nation with the audacity of his unconventional mind.

Today the *Sun* rarely promotes or even defends a new idea. Its only competitor, the Hearst *News-Post*, boasts a circulation forty thousand greater than any one of the three *Sunpapers*.

H. L. Mencken is not now actively associated with the *Sun*, though he still writes a weekly piece attacking New Deal legislation or defending Japan's invasion of China, according to his mood. He is no longer the center and spur of Baltimore's intellectual circles. He and his cronies still meet on Monday nights for beer at Schellhase's Restaurant; but they have given over what little organized mental activity there is in Baltimore to the esoteric Johns Hopkins people.

Typical of Baltimore's "cultural" organizations today is the Women's Civic League. The League was organized in 1911 to work for a clean, progressive, healthy, and educated city. Now it is mainly a garden club, and its campaigns for civic betterment are campaigns for more trees and flowers.



Old prints reproduced by courtesy of the Kennedy Galleries

Washington Monument

III

BALTIMORE traces her genealogy back to 1625, when George Calvert, Lord of Baltimore (in Ireland), applied to King James I for a grant of land in northern Virginia — now Maryland. He died before the charter had passed the Great Seal, so the land was issued in the name of his son, Lord Cecil Baltimore, in 1632. Baltimore Town was laid out a century later at the head of the Patapsco River.

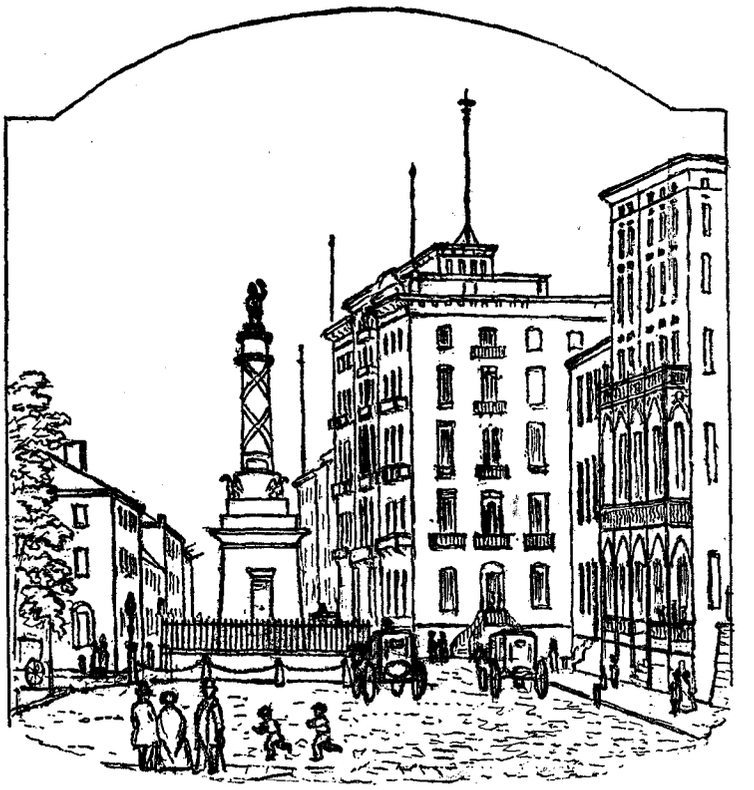
From earliest days, Baltimore was a shipping center. Baltimore clippers, originating from French frigates and luggers, were the fastest craft of their era. Today Baltimore ranks among the first American seaports in amount of foreign trade. The huge, spreading piers of the B. & O. Railway and other companies accommodate the ships of fifty-eight foreign and coastal steamship lines. But a city cannot survive on its port alone.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

So Baltimore turned to industry.

The city made enormous concessions to attract industrialists. After the World War, it was decreed that manufacturers should be exempt from taxation on their machinery, their equipment, their raw materials, their goods in process of manufacture, their finished products, and all goods receivable. Industrial sites, most of them in territory recently annexed by the city, were given a tax rate of 78 per cent of the full city rate. In addition to favorable taxation, the State held out legal inducements in the form of extremely loose incorporation laws. Maryland incorporation laws are shot through with loopholes even bigger than those of Delaware.

The concessions bore fruit. Today the people of Baltimore work in 1,800 industrial plants: clothing factories; foundry and machine works; copper, steel, tin, and chemical plants. Located in or around Baltimore are vast factories of Bethlehem Steel, U. S. Alcohol, Western Electric, and several giant oil refineries. In 1937 the city's manufactures were worth over $900,000,000.



Battle Monument

IV

ALTHOUGH BALTIMORE was overwhelmingly pro-South during the Civil War, the sympathies of several of her most prominent families were split. The hatreds engendered then are immortal and live today as bitterly as they did in the 1860's. The Civil War is forgotten in the North; and the South has worked out a settlement to the South's own satisfaction. But to the border town of Baltimore a true peace has never come. This is a prime example of what sociologists call "cultural lag," and it is evident in every aspect of the town's life.

In Baltimore now, even as in many cities of the deep South, "emancipation" of the Negro is largely a fiction. Race prejudice, far from abating, is increasing along with the colored population. The proportion of Negroes had remained almost constant from the eighteenth century until 1920, when they began to increase five times as fast as the whites. In 1750 there were 40,000 Negroes in Baltimore. As late as 1880 there were only 50,000. But in 1930 there were 150,000; and today they make up more than a fifth of the population. Most of the increase consists of Negroes who have moved from rural Maryland into Baltimore, where relief is quicker, surer, and more generous.

Baltimore Negroes are caught midstream between the relative freedom of the North and the fixed traditions of the South. They have separate schools, theatres, restaurants, and churches. Like Negroes everywhere, they live in the most dilapidated and run-down areas of the city. Their living conditions are viewed with solemnity by the few whites who think about such things. But Baltimore inertia is nowhere more deep-seated than in the field of social reform.

The tuberculosis rate in the Negro districts is from six to eleven times as great as the whole city's average. Street cleaning and lighting, paving, sewage disposal, and police protection are all substandard in the colored areas. Syphilis is more than five times as frequent among Negroes as in the city as a whole, and seventy-three out of every hundred deaths from venereal disease are of Negroes.

There are no adequate hospitals available

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for mentally unfit Negro children. Down in the colored districts you can see the little mental defectives running the streets, unfit to dress themselves or care for their most primitive needs. Small wonder that Negroes contribute more than three fourths of all illegitimate births in Baltimore.

There are a few signs of insurgency in the colored population. Politically, the Negro population has always been a sleeping giant. Now, more Negroes are voting with each election. The Baltimore Negro newspaper, the *Afro-American*, distributes ninety thousand copies in thirty-nine States every week. The paper is devoted, in the main, to Negro social events, but its platform is almost revolutionary: equal pay, equal representation, labor organization among colored workers.

Maryland Negroes have recently had some important victories. They won a case involving admission of colored students to the State-run law school, and just a few weeks ago they won an equal-pay case for colored teachers (which is being appealed). A handful of whites consider this activity on the part of the Negroes all to the good, but most of them feel that it is pretty ominous.

V

THE PEOPLE OF BALTIMORE have no aversion to machine government. In fact they are perfectly willing to support not one but two political machines. Both are Democratic, of course. Right now one is running the city, and the other is running the State.

As are most Eastern cities, Baltimore is controlled by ward politicians. The precinct, ward, and district leaders are exceedingly important fellows. When you want something, you go to them. Baltimore was originally run by English Catholics; later by German Protestants. When the Irish immigrants came, they supplanted the Germans first in the menial jobs and then at the top, and the city is still in the hands of the b'hoys, with Poles and Italians working the basic political mechanisms.

The rivalry between the machines stems from an old personal enmity between the two heads, Howard W. Jackson and William Curran. Mayor Jackson's first term was back in the middle '20's. He made a capable mayor, but his personal habits offended certain pious and powerful folk. They blocked his renomination and ran Curran, a bright young criminal lawyer, in his place. (A Republican won the election.) Jackson came back — he "hasn't had a drink for ten years" — and re-entered politics. Now he is serving his third consecutive term as Mayor and has a firm grip on the city.

The Curran-Bruce-O'Conor machine runs the State government. Curran is the head man; Howard Bruce is the wealthy "angel"; Herbert R. O'Conor is the current Governor. This machine is almost indistinguishable from Jackson's in its political and social orientation. In the last Senatorial election, when Maryland was a "purge" State, top men in both organizations supported anti-New Deal Senator Tydings, while aberrant New Dealers within the machines forgot their enmity long enough to line up behind the Roosevelt favorite, Davy Lewis.

The most startling phenomenon of Baltimore's politics is not machine control or corruption. As a matter of fact there are fewer political scandals than in most big cities. Baltimore's really unique political factor is "Mrs. B.," a charming, gray-haired, sixty-four-year-old reformer. Her real name, Marie Bauernschmidt, was long ago abbreviated by headline writers, and she became known to all Baltimore simply as "Mrs. B." She is rich, independent of all political factions. She has made some frightful mistakes in judgment and she curses like a sailor but nevertheless she is a towering paragon of civic virtue. On election eve, beside thousands of radios, civic-minded citizens listen to her statement of whom she is supporting, and the next day they go to the polls and vote accordingly. She is probably the most enduringly powerful single individual in Baltimore politics, not excepting Mayor Howard W. Jackson himself.

Almost all Mrs. B.'s assaults on political corruption have grown out of her belligerent interest in the welfare of the public schools. Twenty years ago, most Baltimore teachers were political appointees. All parents who could possibly afford it sent their children to the private schools with which Baltimore still abounds. There were only niggardly appropriations for public schools. Municipal leaders considered them a low form of charity, and politicians turned them into feeding troughs for the faithful. Irate Baltimoreans finally organized the Public School Association and engaged the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

energetic Mrs. B. as Executive Secretary — a post she has held ever since, steadily refusing any financial compensation. She got rid of every political plum in the school system in short order. From this beginning, her influence spread out to other spheres; but her base of operations is still the schools.

For example, a couple of years ago Mrs. B. heard reports that a vicious and disreputable joint was advertising openly over the radio. Some high-school girls and boys had visited the place and told their parents about it. The parents, unwilling to take their children to the police and later before a grand jury, appealed to Mrs. B. for advice. She launched an investigation — which led directly to Police Commissioner Lawson as the power behind the offensive establishment. Mrs. B. lit, tooth and nail, into the Commissioner. She didn't get him on that count; but the Federal Securities and Exchange Commission discovered, in the subsequent investigation, that he was running a crooked brokerage business. Mr. Lawson landed in the penitentiary, and another successful political crusade was chalked up for Mrs. B. Baltimore would backslide and become a very different sort of place if Mrs. Bauernschmidt were not on the scene to prod it.

VI

THE BALTIMORE LABOR MOVEMENT provides an accurate reflection of the city's pervading inertia. Labor is incredibly weak for a seaport town. Baltimore has always been open-shop.

The biggest labor issue today is Bethlehem Steel, outside town at Sparrow's Point, where some 16,000 workers are, for the most part, still unorganized. Drive out to Sparrow's Point any day or night and you will see giant factories belching the black and prosperous smoke of war orders. Clustered round the plants are the large gray houses of a company town, looking as monotonous as rows of tired old soldiers. About half the steel workers live in them. Talk to the workers, and they will tell you that the dingier houses rent for $32, the better ones for $45. "A month?" you ask. "No, every pay day," is the answer — every two weeks. And how do the workers pay such rents? By crowding two or three or more families into each house.

Discontent there is, but company police allow no union organizers to enter the town, and joining a union openly is worth a worker's job. In spite of this, the Steel Workers' Union claims, vaguely, that it has made "substantial headway" at Sparrow's Point.

The largest Baltimore union is the Amalgamated Clothing Workers. But the spark plug of the labor movement is the National Maritime Union. Picturesque Paddy Whalen of the N.M.U. will gladly tell you how water-front labor has grown up, since the days of the radical Marine Workers' Industrial Union, under the lone but sterling leadership of Paddy Whalen. The curious part of it is that he is not far wrong. His ambition now is to see the A. F. of L. longshoremen come into the C.I.O. and overthrow the "showup" system, under which they cluster on the docks every morning meekly soliciting jobs.

VII

THROUGH TWO CENTURIES, Baltimore has acquired one of the gaudiest water fronts in the world. This district, centering around South Broadway, is a private world of its own.

Covering a territory of several square blocks, hundreds of tiny, fly-specked holes in the wall front the streets at all angles. Swaying tin signs featuring rather bilious-looking glasses of beer, here and there a large and painfully new neon sign, and the unholy blare of nickelodeons identify the places as taverns.

The area has an interesting history. Its origin lies in the past, when white sails dotted the water front and seamen's unions were nonexistent. For more than a century, shipping was controlled by a group of men known to the trade as "crimps." A crimp usually owned a combination boardinghouse and saloon, often with rooms for prostitutes in the rear. Each crimp had a contract with a shipping concern to furnish all the sailors the company required; he was paid a fee for each sailor he shipped. There still remain a few of these crimp joints on South Broadway, signing on sailors for foreign and domestic lines.

Under the old system, the sailorman's only chance of "shipping out" was to take lodgings with a crimp and patronize his saloon and his women. The places were located along Thames Avenue, South Broadway, and Registrar Avenue. A legal red-light district, where both white and Negro girls worked, was nearby. The white

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

girls had the better houses on the main streets; the Negroes had the side streets and back alleys, as in more respectable districts.

South Broadway, being definitely outside the law, came with the passing years to be more and more a community of its own.

Prohibition might have been expected to disintegrate or at least scatter the establishments dealing in liquor and women. Actually, it only concentrated and increased them. Outwardly, South Broadway became a jumble of hot-dog stands, restaurants, and pool rooms; actually, it did a rushing bootleg business.

With repeal, the speakeasies got their liquor signs down from the attic and hung them outside once more. Business along South Broadway went on as usual.

Racial lines, sharply drawn in Baltimore, had meanwhile forced the separation of white and black prostitutes. The colored girls had no means of moving and, perforce, stayed where they were when prostitution was made illegal. The white girls moved into the speakeasies during Prohibition days. Pressure against vice in the more institutionalized form in Baltimore now is very strong, and white girls in houses have to move constantly.

In the Negro red-light district around Bond and Pratt streets, there is no such restraint. The girls solicit in the Negro taverns and on the streets.

White men who are tempted to explore the cheaper Negro section instead of looking for a white establishment meet with police interference. In order to prevent intermingling of the races, detectives roam about looking for white men who "lower the dignity of their race" by visiting colored prostitutes. The girls are usually punished in such cases by being arrested on the old common-law charge of "obstructing free passage."

VIII

BALTIMORE USED to be called a "gracious lady." Through mental and physical neglect, the lady has grown old and coarse and harsh. Smoke, dirt, poverty, and lethargy have stolen the charm of the city.

The colors of Baltimore are the colors of a steel factory — sullen brick reds, grimy smoke grays. There is little of striking physical beauty in the city, except the rolling green slopes of Druid Hill Park and the swollen estuary as seen from Federal Hill. In the old days there were wide boulevards and graceful homes in the middle of the city. Now there is mediocrity and commonplaceness, with a good deal of suffocating ugliness thrown in. H. L. Mencken describes the town as having the "frowsy, unkempt, out-at-elbow, forlorn air of a third-rate lodging house."

As must all old cities, Baltimore is gradually decaying in the center. But she is doing little to make the process orderly. When the old buildings fall, parking lots or junk yards replace them, and that's that.

The tenements of the blighted areas next to the business district stand until they collapse from senescence. The four slum-clearance projects don't affect many of these buildings. They aren't worth tearing down, because even the land under them hasn't any use that anyone can think of. There was never a plan to direct Baltimore's growth, and doubtless there will never be a plan to direct her disintegration.

So Baltimore sits, in smug contemplation of her navel, ignoring a thousand evils — lethargy the most vicious of them all. How long the city will remain petrified in this rapt position is anyone's guess. This much is sure; it will take new blood or some terrific force not now in evidence to bring Baltimore back to life.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This Trash Must Go!

by **COURTNEY RYLEY COOPER**

A TORRENT of smutty magazines is flowing across the newsstands of the nation. Last month eight million people — most of them under twenty-one — bought copies of 150 nationally distributed periodicals reeking with frankly objectionable material; in some localities these magazines constitute from one fourth to one half of all newsstand sales. These are publications that possess no literary or artistic merit; any intelligent adult would instantly recognize them as deliberate commercial exploitations of filth and as patent violations of existing laws against obscenity.

The filthy magazine is not a chimera of prudish minds. Its menace is real, its influence potently crime-inciting. Law-enforcement agencies recognize that the sex criminal is a reader of such literature and that the imaginations of most juvenile delinquents are inflamed by pornographic publications.

Lewis E. Lawes, Warden of Sing Sing Prison, declares:

> Salacious magazines are definitely connected with the criminal activity of individuals predisposed toward sex crimes. They have had a definite effect in many cases with which I have come directly in contact.

J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, testifies:

> The publication and distribution of salacious material is a peculiarly vicious evil; the destruction of moral character caused by it among young people cannot be overestimated. The circulation of periodicals containing such material plays an important part in the development of crime among the youth of your country.

In the past decade, the growth of salacious literature has been the most rapid in history. During this period sex crimes have more than doubled, with one out of every four committed by youths under twenty. The latest National Uniform Crime Reports Bulletin indicates that, while crime in general waned in the U. S. during 1939, sex offenses increased 7 per cent. Rape cases have shot up 50 per cent in the past six years.

Sanford Bates, former Director of Federal Prisons, attributes this increase largely "to the lurid accounts of sex crimes which appear in public prints, sex stories in magazines, movies, etc."

K. P. Aldrich, Chief Inspector of the Post Office Department, asserts: "The present flood of filthy publications is greatly responsible for the increase in sex crimes and furnishes an important motivation to youthful offenders."

But overt crime is not the only important part of the problem. Wherever obscene magazines circulate, cultural values decline; inferior standards of taste and morals prevail. The pernicious effect of such magazines on high-school children is keenly realized by principals and teachers.

Frederick Houk Law, New York Director of the National Education Association, voices the attitude of the teaching profession when he says: "For the young especially, such publications cultivate vulgarity, lower taste; awaken lack of respect for womanhood; and lead directly toward an increase of social evils."

Distinctions must be made, of course, among various types of magazines. There are some that handle risqué material with wit or intelligent humor — with verve and urbanity; to brand them as obscene would run counter to the generally accepted attitudes of society today. The filthy magazines that have lately provoked cleanup campaigns in many communities are easily recognizable by their cheap vulgarity; they specialize in portraying a degraded concept of sex or in glorifying the activities of criminals and perverts.

II

FEW PERSONS realize how widespread the pox of smutty magazines has become. They can be bought by the bale by any thirteen-year-old

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

child in almost any city or town in the U. S. They filter into the corner candy store; they can be purchased at filling stations, soda fountains, railroad and bus waiting rooms. They flaunt suggestively posed near-nudes on their covers; their contents are revolting slime, nauseating to the normal adult but dangerously appealing to weak or impressionable mentalities.

These publications are beyond the pale of decency, not only in their text and illustrations but also in their advertising columns, which offer everything from sexual stimulants, fake dice, and abortifacients to the vilest of privately printed obscenities. Among the latter are the revolting "cartoon books" — sets of six or eight drawings purporting to reveal perversions in the lives of stage and screen stars. That cartoon books thus advertised find their way into the hands of high-school youths and incite some to similar practices has been established by postal inspectors and local law-enforcement officers. Faced by this vicious situation, whole communities are demanding a cleanup in the underworld branches of the magazine business.

Prosecution of offenders in the federal courts has not been highly successful. In the first place, it is difficult to find a binding definition of obscenity; it differs with every judge and jury. Moreover, although the newsstands of the country may be flooded with a certain obscene periodical, a case can be brought only at the point of origin — that is, where the magazine was printed.

The story of an actual prosecution of such an offender demonstrates the difficulty of handling these cases.

It has taken post-office inspectors as much as a year to put a single outfit out of business, for such publishers work along complicated lines. One magazine, in fact, was produced by *four* companies: one edited the magazine; another did the printing; a third outfit placed the magazines on newsstands; and, finally, a forwarding company did the shipping. This, incidentally, is the usual camouflage, designed to make the obscenity laws more difficult to enforce.

To make an airtight case against this gang, it was first necessary to place the entire printing plant under surveillance. Then, officers had to hide in express wagons and actually receive bundles of magazines as they came down the chute from the shipping company, marking certain copies so that they could be identified later. After that, it was necessary to ride with the marked bundles, following them over State lines and through to the newsstands, where they were purchased by inspectors.

All this was in preparation for the inevitable question by a defense lawyer: "Well, Mr. Inspector, how do you know that this particular magazine actually traveled interstate by common carrier?"

To which the answer was: "Because I personally initialed it when it came from the printing company; I rode with it to the railroad station; I was in the baggage car when it was received as an express shipment; and I accompanied it to its destination across a State line, where I purchased it, recognizing it as the evidence in question because of my own writing on the cover."

In this case, a conviction was secured. But the punishment meted out to the defendant was ludicrous. The corporation was fined $250, and the publisher was placed on probation for four months, after promising that he wouldn't print naughty magazines any more!

Federal judges cannot be accused of mere blandness or indifference in this matter. Their hands are tied by cumbersome and obsolete laws; apparently, too, they are unwilling to turn federal courts into tribunals of morality.

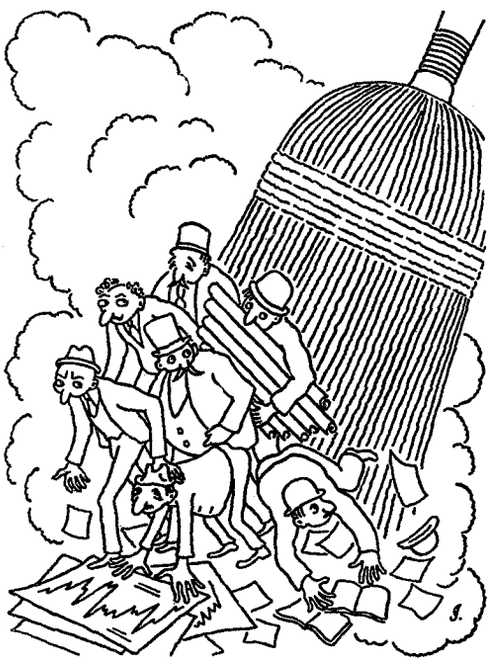
PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This throws the responsibility for suppressing obscene literature on local courts and prosecutors — *which is exactly where it belongs.*

III

A BRILLIANT EXAMPLE of what can be accomplished by local community action is the Permanent Committee on Public Decency formed in Buffalo, New York, as a result of a campaign by the *Buffalo Evening News*. Here's a step-by-step account of how it worked out.

The editor of the *News* detailed T. A. Boris, one of his best reporters, to examine newsstands and buy samples of objectionable literature. In a few hours, Boris picked up an armful of stench-making periodicals, showed them to civic leaders and clergymen of the Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish faiths; they readily agreed to cooperate in the campaign. Next, the chief of the Buffalo police, the U. S. district attorney, and the F.B.I. were asked to conduct separate investigations. While these were in progress, the Parent-Teacher Association, the Y.M.C.A., and the local heads of the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Junior Chamber of Commerce, and Holy Name Society gave their enthusiastic sanction to the drive. Radio speeches presenting the viewpoints of educators, physicians, and housewives were made by the presidents of the State Teacher's College, County Medical Society, and Federation of Women's Clubs. In brief, the whole community was aroused to concerted action against indecent publications.



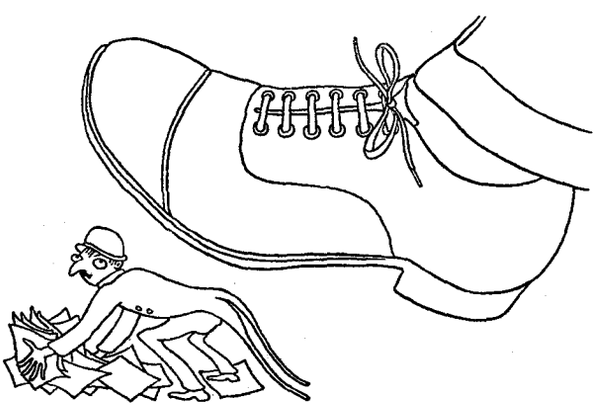
Two weeks after the campaign began, the Buffalo Police Department presented to a grand jury evidence that local indecency ordinances were being violated. Three indictments were returned; three officials of magazine-distributing companies surrendered and posted bail. F.B.I. men made three further arrests in connection with improper use of the mails. Twenty-nine news dealers removed objectionable magazines from their stands; a wholesale distributor announced that he thereafter would refuse to distribute off-color magazines.

A month after the campaign started, not a smutty magazine could be bought on Buffalo newsstands. To perpetuate the success of the drive, a permanent committee was formed; it consists of two priests, two ministers, an Episcopal bishop, two rabbis, and the heads of practically every organization in the city. And — this may be the most important result of all — the campaign has brought civic enthusiasm to a higher pitch than anything has done in many years.

Another successful technique for cleaning up the newsstands was recently employed in Westchester County, New York.

District Attorney Walter A. Ferris, aroused by a plague of crime, invited distributors of sex magazines to attend a meeting in his office. The distributors admitted they did not enjoy handling filthy literature but found themselves driven to it by competition. Without threats or hectoring, Ferris said to them: "You and I both want this thing stopped, and we can do it by working together. Stop your own violations, and I will punish the other fellow."

The distributors pledged themselves to the program, policed every stand in Westchester, reported news dealers who bought objectionable magazines from other sources. No arrests were made; pressure from the D. A.'s office — backed by a determined coalition of civic



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and religious organizations — was sufficient. Westchester was freed of dirty magazines with not a single arrest, not a dollar of cost to the county, no injustice, and no punishment of the "little fellow."

Catholics have sponsored decency drives in several States under the aegis of the National Organization for Decent Literature. Members of the local organization visit news dealers, point out the dangers to citizenship and morals attendant on the sale of indecent literature to young people. The dealer is persuaded to remove from his stand publications which glorify crime and criminals, feature illicit love, carry indecent "art" or disreputable advertising.

In South Bend, Indiana, forty-three druggists, sick of the stench arising from their own magazine racks, organized and wrote individual letters to wholesalers: "In the future I shall demand that you refrain from delivering anything that is not acceptable to the moral standards of my customers." One druggist placed a large placard over his magazine rack: *Prevalence of obscene and indecent magazines has prompted me to discontinue the sale of all magazines that offend common decency.* Wholesale distributors who persisted in sending indecent magazines along with legitimate periodicals (the so-called block-booking system) found that druggists were pitching these smut sheets under the counter, returning them unsold. Faced with a flood of return magazines, the once compulsory block-booking arrangement sank without a bubble. South Bend's newsstands were purged.

Nearby Fort Wayne succeeded in a cleanup drive by placing emphasis on the positive rather than the negative side. A League for Clean Reading was formed, and an emblem of decency awarded to every seller of magazines who co-operated in the campaign.

In half a dozen other Hoosier towns, similar crusades have been undertaken.

In New York City, a Council for Decency in Magazines, strictly nonsectarian, was formed in 1938 to check the sale of the many "borderline" periodicals that offend against reasonable canons of good taste. It is in no sense a prosecuting organization; its aims are to arouse public opinion and to secure the co-operation of publishers, distributors, and news dealers. The Council advocates legislation requiring the name and address of the publisher to be printed in the "masthead" of the magazine. Such legislation would put an end to the fly-by-night publisher who brings out a single issue of an offensive magazine, cashes in on its quick sale to news dealers, then disappears from view — to bob up three months later at a different address with another publication as objectionable as the first.

In all these local drives, no censorship of the press is involved; no legitimate literary or artistic liberty is curtailed. Bluenose zealotry is frowned on by the campaigners themselves, as un-American and contrary to contemporary reform methods. Communities all over the U. S. are discovering that, the moment they organize and invoke local indecency ordinances against smutty magazines, publishers and distributors seize a broom and clean their own house. This simple technique has swept filthy magazines off the newsstands not only in the communities mentioned above but also in Albany, New York; Boston, Lowell, Lynn, and ten other smaller cities in Massachusetts; Grand Rapids, Michigan; Des Moines, Iowa; Birmingham, Alabama; Los Angeles, California; and elsewhere.

No city or town need be plagued by the sex purveyor, pervert maker, or morals wrecker any longer than it takes to organize against him. His malodorous product and all that it represents in human and economic waste can be obliterated by taking a community stand against it.

J. Edgar Hoover speaks for every decent-minded citizen when he says: "There is no place in America for the filthy magazine. This trash must go!"

In an early issue:
'Main Street in 1940,'
by Dale Kramer

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Has Germany a 'Death Ray'?

by **ALBERT BRANDT**

In the first weeks of the European war, the failure of the nations involved to employ the terrible new weapons known to be in existence caused general surprise. What about the threatened "war by science," which was to hurl Europe into chaos overnight and destroy cities and annihilate civilian populations? Certain commentators were even moved to suggest that, if things didn't start happening, this would be a "dull" war.

In the latter part of November, however, the course of the war changed abruptly. A series of stupendous naval disasters took place. In the first week it was estimated that an unknown weapon took a toll of 21 vessels totaling 93,300 tons of Allied and neutral shipping. By the end of the succeeding week, 24 additional vessels, amounting to 92,400 tons, were scuttled. The cause of destruction was variously assigned to ordinary contact mines deposited by submarines and airplanes in British coastal waters, to runaway and floating mines in international shipping lanes. But, whatever else remained open to surmise, certain it was that the expected "war by science" had begun: consternation replaced surprise.

Finally the new weapon was identified as the "magnetic" mine. Immediately thereafter, Prime Minister Chamberlain told the people of the British Empire: "Already we know the secret of the magnetic mine and we shall soon master it as we have already mastered the U-boat."

But suppose it should prove possible to bring into action a weapon that would wreak havoc so swiftly there could be no possibility of defense. Of the new terrors talked about, there is none that holds such wide general interest as the "death ray." Since the close of the first World War, there has been occasional mention of such an invention but always as unverified rumor or incredible sensationalism. The progress of the European war will finally answer the question whether there has been developed a usable death ray against which there will be no adequate protection. Meanwhile, behind the veil of military secrecy and experimenters' reticence, certain facts are known which may help anticipate what this answer will be.

Two schools of thought divide opinion on the subject of death rays. The first holds that the death ray remains a theoretical possibility, without chance of practical development. Professor Langevin of the Collège de France, who has followed experiments with the ultrashort wave in Europe, adopts this opinion, as does Major George Fielding Eliot in this country. Their conclusion is that, while the ultrashort wave will be developed for a number of uses, the idea of utilizing its oscillations to administer destruction from afar remains an illusion. However, Professor Langevin's colleague, Professor Mangin, voices emphatic disagreement with this point of view. Not only does he believe in the theoretical possibility of the death ray, but he is persuaded that experiments have already made its application in warfare an imminent eventuality. By means of the ultrashort wave he believes that the Germans "have succeeded in creating an instrument of death where others, since the birth of modern physics, have sought only to attain certain scientific objectives."

II

Dr. Nikola Tesla, pioneer in the field of high-tension electricity, who designed the power system at Niagara Falls, takes the position that the "force ray," capable of destroy-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing an army a hundred miles away and stopping airplanes in midair, has reached the point where it is an entirely feasible invention, requiring only a limited amount of development to be a perfected weapon. Scientists are inclined to discount Dr. Tesla's frequent predictions as speculation based more on enthusiasm than on research.

In 1936, according to a United Press dispatch of May 28 of that year, an electrician who liked to putter around with unusual gadgets was put on trial in San Francisco. Henry Fleur was accused of defrauding two men whom he had induced to invest money in his "death-ray machine." He entered a plea of not guilty and invited the trial jury to witness what his apparatus could do. The jury adjourned to Fleur's homemade laboratory and watched him turn a wheel and focus a beam of light on a glass case containing live termites. Instantly the insects were destroyed. In turn he focused his beam on a snake, a lizard, and several small animals. All of them were annihilated.

He explained to the jury that "a bombardment of ultrashort electrical waves which I send down a beam of light does the work. These waves are attuned to the normal bodily vibrations of the animals to be destroyed. The ultrashort waves increase the vibrations to such an extent that the individual molecules in the body of the animal simply explode." He was acquitted. It was later rumored that the War Department was investigating Mr. Fleur's invention. What Fleur may be describing is what physicists call a "resonance effect." It is highly questionable whether ultrashort radio waves can produce the effects he claims.

At about the time Henry Fleur was on trial in San Francisco, Guglielmo Marconi was reported in the *New York Times* to have announced in Italy that he was gratified by the results of his experiments in stopping motors over long distances. He hoped by means of radio waves to be able to disrupt the ignition system of a motor — in, we might suppose, plane, tank, or ship.

Meanwhile, on February 1, 1936, the University of Illinois had released to the Associated Press the news that scientists there had developed a beam of neutrons which was fourteen times as deadly as the X ray. The beam, designed to aid victims of leukemia, was found to be fatal to normal human beings because of its rapid destruction of white blood corpuscles. The great danger inherent in experimentation with these superpowerful rays necessitated the most elaborate precautions.

This danger, by the way, appears to have slowed up much experimentation along such lines. The Japanese, after suffering several frightful accidents, switched their experiments to the open sea so that no bystanders would be affected. Working in vessels innocuously appearing as fishing trawlers, they were reported to be killing millions of fish by means of a ray of an undisclosed nature. The experiments have been described by the German engineer, Kurt Doberer, coauthor of *Der Elektro Krieg*, which appeared in 1936. The French emigrant magazine *Neues Tagebuch*, of June 23, 1934, also describes some of these experiments made in the open sea.

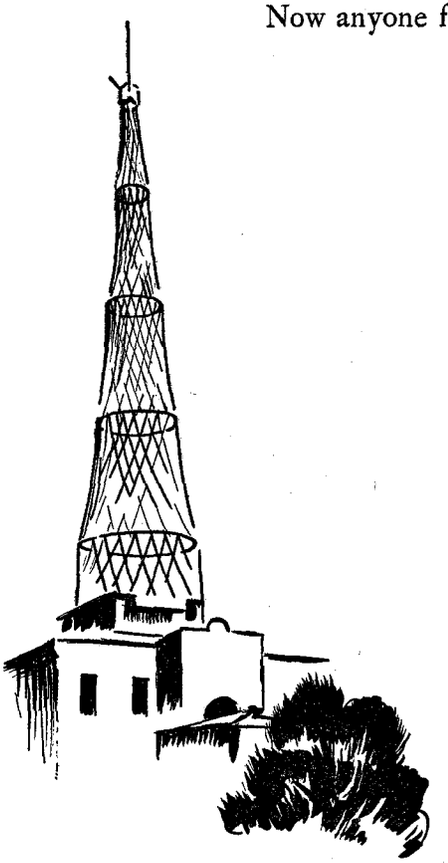
Dr. Antonio Longoria, addressing the National Inventors' Congress in Omaha two years ago, described a death-ray engine which he had invented which broke down blood molecules instantly, killing rabbits, dogs, and cats. He stated that the federal government had prohibited the exhibition of his invention, as he had planned, and that he had agreed to keep details a secret until a war crisis should arise. In an interview in the *New York Herald Tribune* of October 13, 1939, and later in a broadcast over the Columbia network, this experimenter announced that he could set up his death-ray apparatus "in four or five hours through the use of any high-grade X-ray machine" but that this would be done only if "the United States were invaded without cause." He indicated that his death ray "lies in one of the unexplored frequency bands in the vicinity of the X ray."

At Highland, New Jersey, during maneuvers reported in the *New York Times* of August 5, 1938, the United States army demonstrated an invisible mystery ray which squarely hit a ship at sea thirty-eight out of forty-one times, though the vessel's motors were silenced and her lights extinguished. It was proposed that this beam, whose secret is closely guarded, be used as an automatic range finder on guns. It is likely that these War Department experiments involve nothing more exciting than the familiar thermocouple, which may detect a

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ship's heat at a distance and so register her presence. It seems that the same beam may be used in detecting airplanes and directing anti-aircraft fire by night.

The French have been experimenting with rays that could cripple motors. Some time ago, so the *Neuer Vorwaerts* of August 18, 1935, states, two French engineers named Kielhaus and Christmas displayed to the French War Ministry an invention with tremendous military possibilities. By directing rays through cannonlike apertures to great heights, airplanes could be stopped from passing through the invisible barrier which was erected. The experiments of Professor D'Arsonval of France, according to the same source, tend in the same direction but with the stress laid on the use of radio transmission techniques.



III

ONE OF THE outstanding authorities on short waves is Professor Abraham Esau of the University of Jena. In him the Nazis have an invaluable ally in pursuing their war program. The German Radio Science League, which Dr. Esau heads, has trained one of the best equipped groups of radio technicians in the world. But, aside from his public work, Dr. Esau is in charge of vital military experimentation which is carefully concealed from the public gaze. He was assigned — after a thorough investigation of the potentialities of short-wave stations in wartime had been published in the general staff's magazine, *Militaerwissen Schaftliche Rundschau*, of July, 1936 — to build a string of "short-wave stations" on the German borders. The excuse given for this intensive activity in the short wave lengths was that certain sections of German territory cannot, owing to atmospheric peculiarities, get normal radio reception from German stations. The *Neue Weltbühne* of Prague quoted the leader of the German Radio Service, Herr Hadamovsky, as describing this area as

> that wide strip of German territory from the Czech border through Coburg, Salzungen, Koblenz, in the Oldenburg area as far as the Dutch border, the Black Forest, at the Bodensee, in the Bavarian Forest, in Eastern Saxonia, North Eastern Pomerania, and in many parts of East Prussia.

The remedy will be, he announced, "the further development of the ultrashort-wave senders."

Now anyone familiar with Germany knows that Herr Hadamovsky has outlined in his description of the area which cannot receive German transmission on the ordinary wave lengths the chief military districts of the country. Those who have lived in these places know that radio reception there is as good as anywhere else in Germany. What is the real purpose of these "ultrashort-wave stations"?

In 1937, Department XIII of the German Post Offices was changed into the Research Laboratory of the Postal Ministry, according to the issue of the *Weltbühne* mentioned earlier. This new institution was to centralize all experiments in telegraphy, radio, and television. And, strangely enough, not Goebbels, who has hitherto been in charge of experimentation in radio, but Goering was made supervisor of the work of what was ostensibly a civilian department. Hitler explained why this was entrusted to his air minister. "This is done," he stated, "because of the great importance which experiments in television have for the security of the air force and the general maintenance of the national defense." Emphatic words indeed for television experimentation. The same language is used by the chief of the general staff, who writes in the *Militarwissenschaftliche Rundschau*, July, 1936:

> We will have to conduct propaganda in foreign countries on different wave lengths, long waves, short waves, and even ultrashort waves — and it must be readily anticipated that short waves will

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not be sufficient to reach the mass of radio listeners even in Europe.

Is it only propaganda that the Nazis wish to send over their borders on their ultrashort waves?

We know that a whole squadron of German Heinkel planes of the H-60 model have been equipped with Diesel engines, which use oil instead of gasoline. This obviates the use of the electrically induced ignition explosion and makes them impervious to the effect of the ultrashort-wave sets with which they are equipped. These ultrashort waves can, however, stop the motors of gasoline-driven airplanes which the enemy will use. In March, 1935, the *New York Times* reported that the increased use of Diesel engines in German planes was explained by the desire to protect them from rays which could halt electrically ignited motors. Reichswehr maneuvers near Altenburg in 1936, the engineers Doberer and Seydewitz report in their *Der Elektro Krieg*, showed that in a 100-meter radius such rays proved effective; orders were given to experiment at greater distances.

As early as 1932, a German engineer patented an invention which would emit rays and stall motors "which are ignited electromagnetically." His experiments, then supervised by the German Reichswehr on a flying field near Frankfurt, showed that engines could be stopped in a radius of 200 meters. Drivers of cars approaching the enclosure found their ignition failing. It is quite probable that, with continued research, this radius has now been extended. Incidentally, recent stories in the American press by correspondents in England relate that auto engines have suddenly failed to function on certain English country roads, with subsequent explanation by military officials that experimental work nearby was responsible.

IV

THE ULTRASHORT WAVES, it must be remembered, are essentially the source of the so-called death rays. Experimentation with one concerns the other. I have spoken to German engineers who have been in the border regions where they are building the ultrashort-wave "sending stations." The equipment for radio communication is easily recognizable by technical men, but my German friends who have had technical training fail to recognize the ultrashort-wave stations now being erected on the borders. It is their opinion that these stations are not merely radio stations.

But, if this is a matter of conjecture, other experiments conducted by Dr. Esau are better known. As early as 1926, German pacifists publicized the destructive ray which Dr. Esau had developed. Carl von Ossietzky, later Nobel Peace Prize winner, warned of its consequences. It was shown that, by exposing living things in the electrical field of a condenser through which vibrations with a frequency of a hundred million a second were sent, they could be destroyed. These experiments were repeated in 1930. A dog was killed by exposure in this electrical field for 43 seconds. Cattle were destroyed in 93 seconds. The *Neues Tagebuch* of June 23, 1934, reported that the autopsy in both cases showed that the ultrashort waves had brought about a paralysis of the heart muscle and changes in the cerebral substance. Death always occurred through paralysis of the heart. The difficulty was in finding material that could offer protection from the rays for the experimenters and equipment. The experiments of 1934 showed that iron and steel columns crumbled in a few seconds under the terrible frequency.

In 1936, German science presented to the government a *Todesstrahl* — the so-called *Z-Strahlen* — a death ray which killed living things by projecting lead atoms with a speed of 150,000 miles a second. The Nobel Prize-winning physicist, Professor Philipp Lenard of the University of Heidelberg, has turned his attention to the death-ray problem. The *Deutsche Informationen*, a reliable emigrant press service, reported on November 26, 1936, that Lenard had used his own improvements of the powerful *Kathoden Strahlen* as a basis for new experiments to increase their effectiveness at short distances.

Perhaps the most widely publicized development in recent years has been the so-called "invisible" ray which was exhibited by the Hungarian physicist, Stephen Pyrbill, to a group of English scientists in May, 1937. The story of his invention as told in the *Pariser Tageszeitung*, May 25, 1937, is that Dr. Pyrbill made his discovery accidentally. He was working with waves of varying lengths, combining

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

them and juxtaposing them, when one afternoon he looked down to see where his hand was moving a lever and did not see it. He tried to place other objects in the "invisible" zone. The rays caused them to disappear — as far as the naked eye was concerned.

He immediately investigated his discovery and in 1937 was able to perform, in a laboratory in Islington, near London, a disappearing act without mirrors for the benefit of onlooking scientists. A coat was laid upon a chair, which rested on gray cloth covering the stage. The inventor went behind the stage, and the coat vanished. After a few minutes, the chair disappeared. When the inventor stepped to the front of the platform, the chair and coat were again visible. A young lady was invited to sit down on the chair, and she was made invisible, experiencing no ill effects whatsoever. Volunteers from the audience were able to enjoy the same invisibility for a few minutes.

If Pyrbill's claim could have withstood scientific investigations, his rays certainly would have deserved to be called death rays, since the effectiveness of invisible armed forces is readily apparent. Sudden silence, however, followed the initial burst of publicity. It was reported that the Hungarian government was interested in the experiments and was sponsoring them. Nevertheless, Pyrbill later on publicly presented his disappearance effects at Angol Park in Budapest. I asked a layman friend of mine in Budapest to make what inquiries he could about Pyrbill's exhibit. He informed me that it was impossible to go "behind the scenes" and expressed his opinion that the "invisibility" was trickery.

V

IT IS SAFE to say that no nation today has perfected a death ray which can operate over more than comparatively short distances. It is equally certain that every nation is anxiously experimenting so that it may be the first to perfect such an instrument. In the laboratories of Germany, England, France, Russia, and the United States, physicists work ceaselessly. The strategic importance of such an invention would be without parallel. But the extreme development of military technical espionage, in which all nations participate, has made it impossible to retain war secrets for longer than short periods. The chances are that, as it occurred with gas, airplanes, and tanks in the last war and, very likely, magnetic mines in this, the nation that perfects a death ray will have it directed against herself soon after. The perfect military secret has been a fiction of pulp writers. Nevertheless, there is immeasurable advantage in getting there first.

Needless to say, research is proceeding on defensive measures against any conceivable species of death ray. The *French Annales Politiques et Litteraires*, in its February 10, 1937, issue, discusses Doberer's claims and points out that spun-glass vestments and the standard protective equipment of the X-ray laboratories appear to offer considerable obstacles to the penetration of short waves. Up to now, at least, new weapons have called forth other inventions to combat them. The history of ultrashort-wave development will probably record the same balancing process. But it must be remembered that, though, for example, the effectiveness of antiaircraft guns has increased enormously since the World War, this does not mean that airplanes can be prevented from bombing cities. Defensive inventions may lower the effectiveness of new war weapons, but they cannot completely destroy this effectiveness.

Airplane bombardments sufficient to annihilate the population of large areas, mammoth tanks, liquid flame, acid-hurling machines, gas which eats off the skin, explosive bullets, machine guns firing three thousand shots a minute, bacteria used against civilian populations, automatically aimed and fired torpedoes, and now magnetic mines are all there for the generals and admirals to play with. One would think they are enough — but no; every day the specialists are seeking new ways to make death swifter and more certain for a larger number of people.

The death ray, when it comes, will be the final *coup de grâce* administered by war to humanity.

Next month:
'The War, Minus Illusions,'
by William Henry Chamberlin

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Forum Quiz

The Quiz, designed especially for FORUM readers, is planned to amuse them but not to measure their intelligence. Counting 2½ points for each correct answer, a college senior scored 67½ on this month's Quiz. A secretary scored 70, and her businessman employer had a score of 75. Answers on page 80.

1. "My, my; I could almost do a little rug cutting myself," declared Aunt Clytemnestra happily, while chaperoning a teen-age party not long ago. Auntie meant she liked to:
(*a*) *dance* (*b*) *kiss in the dark*
(*c*) *mix cocktails* (*d*) *cut rugs into little pieces*

2. Everyone knows what a U-boat is of course, but what's a Q-boat?
(*a*) *an armed vessel disguised as a merchant ship*
(*b*) *a "pocket" battleship* (*c*) *an English submarine*
(*d*) *a dinghy used in "frostbite" racing*

3. Which one of these statements is FALSE?
(*a*) *Green and black tea come from the same plant.*
(*b*) *"Bill" Bullitt is American Ambassador to France.*
(*c*) *The U. S. army's latest rifle is the Springfield.*

4. Precocious little Agamemnon, aged five, recently became disgusted with a playmate. "Why," snorted Agamemnon, "the boy's a mere sedulous ape." He meant that the lad was:
(*a*) *acting like a Senator* (*b*) *nonreasoning*
(*c*) *imitative* (*d*) *too playful*

5. Yes, the name of the new President of Cuba is:
(*a*) *Colonel Batista*
(*b*) *Ramon Grau San Martin* (*c*) *Mario Menocal*

6. Baseball fans will have no trouble picking the former star who is now a parole officer:
(*a*) *Babe Ruth* (*b*) *Walter Johnson* (*c*) *Lou Gehrig*

7. Speaking of sport — which team won the National League football championship last season?
(*a*) *New York Giants* (*b*) *Green Bay Packers*
(*c*) *Detroit Tigers* (*d*) *Notre Dame Irish*

8. Reporter Henry Wadsworth Longfellow is sobering up but is still incapacitated in that tavern. Can you finish his verse for him?

Tell me not, in mournful numbers,
Life is but an empty dream! —
For the soul is dead that slumbers, . . .

(*a*) *And he that struggles, is supreme!*
(*b*) *And things are not what they seem.*
(*c*) *Never beckons HIM, the gleam!*
(*d*) *It can't raise an ounce of steam!*

9. When warcraft, on the sea or in the air, are in echelon formation, they remind one of:
(*a*) *home and mother* (*b*) *a series of steps*
(*c*) *a circle* (*d*) *a truncated parallelepiped*

10. American Indians, as compared with a few years ago, now number _____:
(*a*) *more* (*b*) *fewer* (*c*) *the same*

11. When her beau, Herkimer, asked Aunt Clytemnestra what kind of fur coat she'd like to have as a wedding gift, Auntie sighed and said, "Chinchilla." Herkimer fainted dead away because:
(*a*) *it is the world's most expensive fur*
(*b*) *it would cost him less than mink*
(*c*) *he had figured on dyed cat*
(*d*) *he'd eaten something that didn't agree with him*

12. Before the navy accepts a new cruiser or destroyer, the ship always gets a shakedown cruise. This is:
(*a*) *the launching* (*b*) *a test run*
(*c*) *the christening* (*d*) *a crash stop*

13. The author of the latest and probably definitive biography of Abraham Lincoln is:
(*a*) *Emmanuel Hertz* (*b*) *Carl Sandburg*
(*c*) *Emil Ludwig*

14. The Big Eye is a new 200-inch reflector telescope now being erected in the State of:
(*a*) *Wisconsin* (*b*) *Texas* (*c*) *California*

15. A film contains: a group of gangsters mowing down another mob with "tommy" guns; talk of rackets and district attorneys; a prison break. The movie was probably produced by:
(*a*) *Paramount* (*b*) *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*
(*c*) *Warner Brothers* (*d*) *20th Century Fox*

16. Which of these statements about architecture is TRUE?
(*a*) *The Byzantine followed the Gothic style.*
(*b*) *The Egyptians invented the arch.*
(*c*) *The Greeks used the Corinthian capital.*

17. Best opinion seems to be that the popularity of "swing" music is now:
(*a*) *on the wane* (*b*) *still on the upgrade*

18. What American writer, whose works were formerly distinguished by whimsy and impeccable morality, has recently written a best seller about a lively gal named Kitty Foyle?
(*a*) *Will Durant* (*b*) *John Steinbeck*
(*c*) *Christopher Morley* (*d*) *Mary Ellen Chase*

19. Do you know how large our regular army is now?
(*a*) *220,000 men* (*b*) *360,000 men*
(*c*) *three men and a boy* (*d*) *110,000 men*

20. Now who do you suppose could have written this?

I celebrate myself, and sing myself,
And what I assume you shall assume,
For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you,
I loafe and invite my soul. . . .

(*a*) *Archibald MacLeish* (*b*) *Carl Sandburg*
(*c*) *Walt Whitman* (*d*) *Franklin D. Roosevelt*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

21. In a Chicago hotel lobby you bump into a huge, round-faced man named Pierre van Paasen. "Hello, Pierre," you'd exclaim:
(*a*) *"Your biography of Stalin is a wow."*
(*b*) *"The war's certainly a flop from a correspondent's point of view, isn't it?"*
(*c*) *"Your music sounds like alley cats to me."*

22. I'm a stranger here myself, but perhaps that long-faced elevator operator can tell you who the Poet of the Sierras was:
(*a*) *Hamlin Garland* (*b*) *Joaquin Miller* (*c*) *Ambrose Bierce*

23. How many bones are there in the human body?
(*a*) *100* (*b*) *206* (*c*) *3* (*d*) *5,280* (*e*) *342*

24. Who wrote the words of this song?

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And auld lang syne?

(*a*) *Robert Burns* (*b*) *Walter Scott* (*c*) *Robert Bruce*

25. If Willy Messerschmitt were to meet Adolf Hitler at a Nazi festival, one might expect Adolf to shout:
(*a*) *"Phooey on your pocket battleships, Willy!"*
(*b*) *"As a Wagnerian conductor, you're punk!"*
(*c*) *"Ach, those planes of yours are fast!"*

26. Railroad reorganization is in the air, and the man in the thick of it is the I.C.C. Chairman, named:
(*a*) *Marriner S. Eccles* (*b*) *Joseph B. Eastman* (*c*) *Frederick E. Williamson*

27. After wearing one of those red-and-green ties you get from your wife each Christmas, you are naturally depressed and pessimistic — like the philosopher:
(*a*) *Aristotle* (*b*) *Schopenhauer* (*c*) *Bergson*

28. Cousin Claudia and her steady are sitting on the parlor sofa in the gloaming. "How about a little levitation?" he inquires. "No," she says, firmly:
(*a*) *"One false move from you, and I'll scream."*
(*b*) *"I'm a disembodied spirit already, sweet."*
(*c*) *"I'll play the zither, and you sing alone."*

29. Please stop beating your wife long enough to pick out the word which is misspelled here:
To say we are sorry we cannot use your 18,000-word short story is extreme understatement. We are mortified, chagrined, dumbfounded, abashed, and embarassed.

30. A complete blank is the only way to describe the expression on a man's face when his wife speaks of brocade, but any woman knows it's:
(*a*) *a rich fabric with a raised pattern*
(*b*) *like needlepoint* (*c*) *crocheted* (*d*) *knitted*

31. Men ought to know more about home decorating. For instance, they ought to know from what article of furniture the thing called a chest of drawers has evolved:
(*a*) *coffin* (*b*) *Bible box* (*c*) *chest* (*d*) *table*

32. Uncle Arthur may take his exercise sitting down, but he's quite right when he insists that the fastest of all swimming strokes is the:
(*a*) *breast stroke* (*b*) *crawl* (*c*) *side stroke*

33. Which Dickens novel may most justly be called autobiographical?
(*a*) *Bleak House* (*b*) *David Copperfield* (*c*) *Dombey & Son*

34. Of the present members of the British cabinet, who has the greatest reputation as a journalist?
(*a*) *Anthony Eden* (*b*) *Neville Chamberlain*
(*c*) *Sir John Simon* (*d*) *Winston Churchill*

35. Please oblige by filling in the missing words:

For of all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these: " . . . . "

(*a*) *Remember when?* (*b*) *He's drunk again!*
(*c*) *Amen, amen!* (*d*) *It might have been!*

36. Little Agamemnon, still only five, looks up from his copy of the *Police Gazette* to inquire, "I say, governor, what is a paranoiac?" You'd correctly reply:
(*a*) *"A person who thinks he's persecuted."*
(*b*) *"A man in love with his wife."* (*c*) *"An idiot."*
(*d*) *"One who lives in a dream world."*

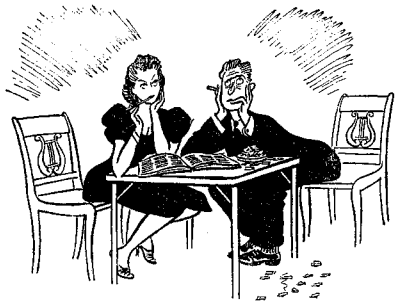
37. One of the books named begins with this sentence — "He was born with a gift of laughter and a sense that the world was mad."
(*a*) *Anthony Adverse* (*b*) *Scaramouche* (*c*) *Escape*

38. One of the world's great libraries, the Bodleian, is located in:
(*a*) *Cambridge, England* (*b*) *Pasadena, California*
(*c*) *the Vatican* (*d*) *Oxford, England* (*e*) *London*

39. Today, Shinto is the religion of what country?
(*a*) *India* (*b*) *Japan* (*c*) *China*

40. Uncle Arthur was telling one of his stories when Cousin Clarence's eyes began to fill with tears. "It's just that I'm allergic to liars," explained Clarence. "Why, you don't know whether a zebra's basic color is white or black!" "Indeed I do," retorted Uncle Art with heat. "It's:
(*a*) *black* (*b*) *white* (*c*) *periwinkle blue*

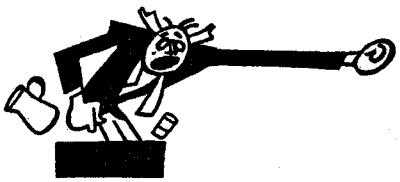
COMPILED BY JO CHAMBERLIN



Drawing by Elmer Lasher

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Our Rostrum*



Hot Southern Tempers

If Mr. Edward Twig will climb into the bombproof shelter for five minutes, we will sound the siren while a couple of his neighbors let loose a Blitzkreig. *Mr. Twig was the author of "Charleston: the Great Myth," in the January* Forum.

Frank K. Myers, *federal judge in the Eastern District of South Carolina, writes, in part:*

It would seem from a reading of the article that Mr. Twig had come to Charleston with a pre-disposition to be nasty. It would further seem that, while here (if he did come), he failed to contact any representative Charlestonians, and was determined to see nothing and to hear nothing to Charleston's advantage. The article is so filled with ridiculous misstatements that time and space would not permit me to comment on it in detail. If you think this article (which is full of filth and misrepresentations) worthy of publication, I have, even to this extent, wasted my time. If you should succeed in having the magazine with this article get into the hands of many of those (both resident and non-resident) who love the old city, its only effect would be to arouse their indignation; and, as to others, their interest in finding out whether this person named Twig had really seen and known Charleston, which would be to its advantage.

Mr. Twig, actually, is not just a fellow who stopped off at Charleston on the way to Florida. He has lived there, for varying lengths of time, over a period of some years. He was living there when he wrote the article. As to whether he has "really seen and known Charleston," we imagine Mr. Twig's rejoinder would be that most Charlestonians can't see the forest for the trees.

General C. P. Summerall, *President of The Citadel, the Military College of South Carolina, is more detailed, no less furious:*

. . . I characterize it as one of the most evil and dastardly libels that could be uttered.

The people of Charleston are very much like those in any other part of the country. Many of them have come from every section of the United States. The social life here, as elsewhere, leads to groupings of similar tastes and associations. Here, as in other old cities of America, there are families who rightfully cherish the pride of ancestry but snobbery does not exist here or elsewhere among well bred people.

The culture in the colleges, schools, churches and clubs and in the intellectual, artistic, professional, religious, fraternal and social organizations, as well as in the homes, is evident to the many visitors of culture who identify themselves with the people. Prominent Englishmen have told me that they regarded Charleston and Richmond as being the American cities most like England.

The old homes represent a period of classic architecture and living in them is no more a reflection upon the people here than in any other city that enjoys the prestige of history. The water-front which appears to have been Mr. Twig's inspiration may be no better or worse than that of any port but cities are not judged by this feature alone.

While few of the people are wealthy, the standard of living compares favorably with that in the south and, in America, it is no reproach to be poor. The public health of Charleston is rated high in the country and the activities of the welfare organizations are on a creditable plane. Law enforcement and politics conform to the American standards and can not be singled out as horrible examples. Nowhere is there a more kindly interest in or better treatment of the colored people than here.

Charleston is too well known and its reputation is too well established at home and abroad to be injured by the extravagant falsehoods in Mr. Twig's slander. The injustice will be indignantly resented by right-thinking people everywhere. It is pertinent to note that *House & Garden* and *The National Geographic Magazine* for March, 1939, and *Life* of December 25, 1939, present a diametrically opposite view. *Life* says: "Capital of the Low Country is Charleston, whose inhabitants probably have better manners and a more thorough appreciation of good living than the residents of any other city in the U. S." "The people of Charleston still live in the lovely historic houses which line its streets." The public will find no difficulty in deciding between these reputable journals and The Forum.

It is deplorable that The Forum should stamp itself as a muckraker and become the medium for propagating this vile and unbelievable attack upon a respected and worthy part of our country and upon the inhabitants *en masse* who are loyal American citizens, striving to accomplish their destiny and that of the nation. The offense of the instigator transcends that of the poison pen. Both have earned a place in a "Who's Who of Infamy."

Regardless of the accuracy of any other statement in his article, may we point out four sentences of Mr. Twig's whose correctness now seems to stand undisputed? Wrote he: "It may safely be said that no place on earth is capable of such concerted and violent indignation as Charleston. The town grows apoplectic with indignation when criticized in any way. The old city is allergic to criticism, no matter how honest or indisputable. It is regrettable but manifestly true that Charleston hates criticism far more than crime."

In milder vein, Mr. William O. Stevens (incidentally, a contributor elsewhere in this issue), who, though not a Charlestonian, is author of a book called Charleston, Historic City of Gardens, *comments:*

I am sorry that Mr. Twig has so unhappy an impression of Charleston. Of course one can draw a dismal picture of any community if only the unpleasant details are selected and accented. I know there are things that irritate the stranger in Charleston, as no doubt the Charlestonian finds things to annoy him in New York and Boston.

But the Charleston people whom I had the pleasure of meeting were charming, helpful and the soul of courtesy. They told me things I wanted to know and enabled me to visit places where usually the visitor cannot go. As for the town itself, I confess to a delight in the streets, lanes, gardens and houses, so unlike any others in America. To me the architecture was unique and beautiful; I can't imagine a pleasanter paradise for painter and etcher. And I am just sentimental enough about American history to get a thrill out of a city that is so rich a shrine of the past.

Charleston does affect different people in contrary ways. Mr. Twig thinks it is pretty awful. I found the place fascinating. Mr. Jonathan Daniels is a sharp critic of the seamy side of life in the Deep South, and yet this is what he writes of Charleston: "Nowhere on this earth that I know are there any people with a clearer sense of the tempo of good manners and good living." And Mr. William Allen White declared that "Charleston is the most civilized town in America."

* Editors' Note: — *These columns are open to brief letters commenting on any article or subject that has appeared in* The Forum. *Because of space limitations, the Editors must reserve the right to publish letters only in part.*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Attitude toward War

To the Editor:

I have read the article by Mr. [J. Fleming] MacLiesh entitled "Youth Examines the War Whoop" [December Forum] and wish to congratulate you upon having the wisdom to print this very appropriate article. I should be very happy to see more such articles in your magazine. It is a viewpoint of the present political situation which is all too much ignored by the mass of people.

Louise Zufall

Long Island City, N. Y.

To the Editor:

As subscriber and reader for many years . . . I wish to say how highly pleased I was at "Youth Examines the War Whoop" in the December issue. . . . Such a sane, simple, sincere, fair story more than refreshed me. I do not know of Mr. MacLiesh; but he is established as a writer in this article. Please let us have more from Mr. MacLiesh or at least things along his line. . . .

Leonora Raines

Atlanta, Ga.

Churches and Taxes

A comment on the January debate, "Should Churches Pay Taxes?" between Messrs. Joseph Ernest McAfee, Robert E. Speer, and Lawrence Lucey:

From my point of view, no matter what religion a man professes, if that religion does not teach its people to practice the Golden Rule then it falls far short in its practice of its high and noble pretensions.

Let us face the fact that less than 50% of the people in the United States attend the church. Is it just to force more than 50% of the people to pay for something they have no voice in? Certainly the whole procedure is very poor ethics. When the church practices ethics as well as religion it will command more interest and be a greater force in our democracy.

Furthermore, we have talked much about the importance of the church and state being separated in our democracy. I doubt very much if that is true when the church allows itself to accept favors from the government. The church should stand on its own feet, with its head erect and announce itself on all problems without any ulterior influence. For instance, in time of war the state expects the church to come with all its august authority to bless and sanctify its arms. There are many other illustrations but this one sets forth my mind on the matter.

Furthermore, sacrifice is a cardinal element in religion. If a church feels that it has what the rest of the community ought to have then let it practice sacrifice rather than coercion in its effort to win new followers. Certainly it will then command more respect and appreciation from the non church going element of the community.

Yes, I am wholeheartedly in favor of taxing the churches.

M. W. Van Tassell
Office of the President
Community Church Workers of the United States of America
Buffalo, N. Y.

More on Washington

To the Editor:

Naturally, I am delighted that you have seen fit to print Mr. [Merlo J.] Pusey's stimulating and penetrating article on the problems faced by disfranchised Washington ["Washington: a National Disgrace," December Forum]. He is well known in Washington as a careful analyst of municipal problems.

Speaking personally and not in the name of the Board of Education of which I have the honor to be president, I agree with his emphasis on the need for reorganization. . . .

. . . The Thomas Jefferson Junior High School is a dilapidated old building, built in 1872 and condemned in 1908. . . . Such is its antiquity that the United States National Museum asked the Board of Education in 1935 for the school's old master clock system, operated by compressed air. The Board was glad to present this antique to the Museum and regretted that it could not present the whole school.

Since 1927 there have been active efforts . . . to secure replacement of this school building. After twelve years, the new school is being built. . . . In spite of the fact that all municipal agencies and citizens were agreed on the need for this new school, twelve years of activity were required to get it, largely because of our cumbersome system of budgets and appropriations. . . .

Marion Wade Doyle, *President*
Board of Education
of the District of Columbia
Washington, D. C.

To the Editor:

Mr. Pusey has shown great restraint. . . .

It is a quaint system that permits affairs of national and international importance to wait, while the Senators and Congressmen decide upon the number of teachers or social workers that the city of Washington should have, or while they discuss the naming of a street or the price of milk in the District of Columbia. Somewhat akin to using a steam roller to drive tacks.

. . . . . .

. . . In other cities the people who govern are residents of the place they govern and are responsible to the voters for their acts. Most of Washington's "ruling class" consider themselves only temporary residents and continue their responsibilities back home. This is one of the chief reasons for the chaotic picture. What is everyone's business is no one's business.

Chalice Coyle

Washington, D. C.

Education Unending

"I Went to College at Fifty," published anonymously in the December Forum, *has brought forth a grateful response:*

¶ It states the situation of the middle aged woman who is restless so very clearly and correctly. It gives me much hope and inspiration to learn that someone of my own age found such an answer to a universal problem. — Edith Mellquist, *New York, N. Y.*

¶ The article should be most stimulating to women who are casting wildly about in their own thinking for some way of making themselves more interesting people. The explosion of the idea that it is more difficult to learn after one is mature pleases me. I did so like the emphasis the writer placed on her responsibility toward contributing to the world about her. The years between fifty and seventy certainly might well be made the most constructive and profitable, not only to the individual herself but also to her immediate group and to society at large. — Alice Rice Cook, *Director of The Graduate Center, New York, N. Y.*

¶ I'm sure this article will show a lot of middle-aged women a good way to side-step the boredom of killing time, and guide them to happier and more useful later years. — Elmer Stevens, *El Paso, Tex.*

'Article of the Month'

To the Editor:

. . . Mr. [Jean Ricochet] Boyd's article "Who's Fit to Survive?" in the December Forum . . . gives tongue to the usually inarticulate middle class man. . . .

. . . In every respect it . . . far surpasses anything else in the issue. Aside from all the other considerations which recommend the article, it is superb as an example of sheer good writing.

In fact, although I couldn't claim to have read every article published in this country, or even this city, under the December 1939 date line, I'd take a chance on its merits to nominate it the article of the month, and I hereby do so.

. . . Make sure this article reaches as many of the people of these United States as you can possibly touch. It merits widespread attention here and abroad.

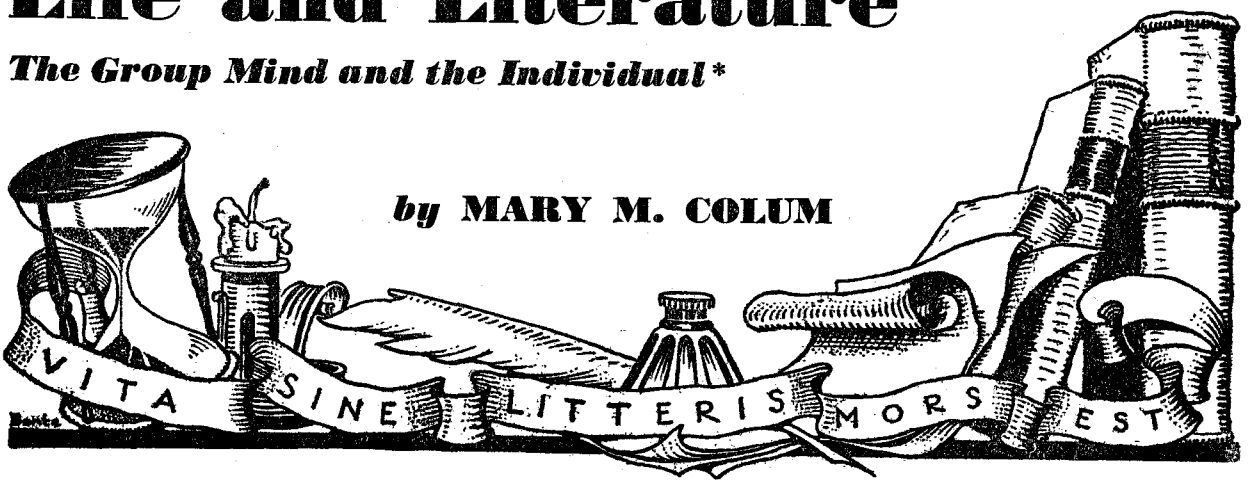
Charlotte Downs

Queens Village, N. Y.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Life and Literature

*The Group Mind and the Individual**



by **MARY M. COLUM**

JULES ROMAINS' *Verdun* is the most important novel that has come out of France in a long time. Here, at last, the author has achieved a mastery over that technique that he has struggled with so long; here he has found a subject, the last war, that fits in with his technique.

It is the fashion in our time to welcome novels by men of untrained minds and little education; every year we have a couple such launched on us and acclaimed as wonders. But *Verdun* could have been produced only by a writer of a highly trained and comprehensive mind, one who knew not only life on many levels but intellectual achievement in various forms. He has been a professor of philosophy, a poet, a dramatist; he has studied history, botany, physiology; he has studied everything that would help him in any degree in this life-work of his. It may, in the future, seem that this novelist is the only one who has really and truly got down on paper the inner core of the life of our times, that he has actually achieved that feat, which seemed so impossible, of expressing in literature an anti-individualist, collectivist age — the age of totalitarian states, of a surge of forces that seem out of the control of men.

Romains' literary philosophy, his technique are, as his readers know, built round what he calls the idea of *unanimisme*. He first evolved this idea about a decade before the last war and he has worked hard ever since — that is, for over thirty years — to match it with a proper literary technique. This theory of *unanimisme* cannot be made entirely clear by definition, but it can be briefly explained.

Unanimisme has been defined as the "sum of individual souls at the moment of their identity" and as "the force that unites man to other men, the unanimity of the mass." In addition to definition, an explanation or illustration is needed, especially as it is abundantly clear that the ideas which Romains has worked at so long have a great validity and an intense relation to our own times. *Unanimisme* may be described as anti-individualism or, perhaps, nonindividualism. The development of the individual soul, its travails, is in the main what literature has been about up to the present; practically all modern novels are built around the individual; the doctrine of individualism is innate in the Christian religion. But Romains has broken with all these traditional ideas; he deals with the group soul. A group may be large or small; it may be a family, an association, a village, a town, a whole population. The individual soul of each member is but a part of the group soul; some people may have even no individual souls but only portions of the group soul; a person may, from time to time, represent a different section of the group soul. The group soul is the great force of the modern world — the force behind wars, totalitarian states, communism, fascism, collectivism of all kinds, industries and factories. Likely enough it is what schoolmasters and schoolmistresses in the old days called the "school spirit," to take an evident example. It is easy to perceive that a person holding completely to this idea might come to believe that he had no personality of his own.

At first, when Romains' series of novels,

---

* EDITOR'S NOTE: — *The recent books discussed by Mrs. Colum in this article are:* Verdun, *by Jules Romains* (*Knopf, $3.00*); Jennie, *by Robert Nathan* (*Knopf, $3.00*); Tales of the Pampas, *by W. H. Hudson* (*Knopf, $2.00*); Happy Days, *by H. L. Mencken* (*Knopf, $2.75*); Encyclopaedia of the Theatre, *by George Jean Nathan* (*Knopf, $3.00*); The Note Books of Leonardo da Vinci, *edited by Edward MacCurdy* (*Reynal & Hitchcock, $5.00*).

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Men of Good Will, began to appear in France at intervals in single volumes, they seemed to the general reader to be just the usual cyclic novel or chronicle novel or *roman fleuve*, as it has been variously termed. Such a novel has been continuously written in France since Balzac first projected it as his *Comédie Humaine*. Then we had Zola's Rougon-Macquart series. Today we have the novels of Roger Martin Du Gard and Duhamel's *Pasquier Chronicles;* before that there were the Jean Christophe series of Romain Rolland and Proust's series, *Recherche du temps perdu*. These novels all deal with the individual soul, and it is the individuals in them whom we remember, whether Jean Christophe or Baron Charlus or Salavin. The genius of the authors was turned to the creation of individuals, but in Jules Romains' series the genius of the author is turned toward constructing or evolving the mass soul from all the individuals he works with.

The 'Group Mind' in War

Here, in 'Verdun,' we have the masterwork of his whole series. The previous volumes often appeared in whole sections to be journalistic reconstructions from facts or reports in filed newspapers. But with this latest book Romains comes to mastery, and the tremendous array of characters who pass through the previous volumes — the actresses, students, priests, industrialists, generals — take their place in the pattern. A component of the author's idea is the realization that history is made by every single individual and also influences every single individual. This means that *Men of Good Will* can be read as a history of our times in which the characters — often actual and historical, like Briand, Gallieni, General Joffre, the Kaiser — are animated by the artist's imagination and in which tense moments of history are actualized for us.

As *Verdun* opens, the armies in the World War have reached a stalemate. The generals are bewildered; the war has begun to bore everybody; populations are beginning to believe that it may go on forever. Gradually we perceive that events are tending to center around the fortress of Verdun: the French Minister of War has a feeling that the Germans will attack there, but there are doubters of this possibility on the French side. Then, through an interview between an international journalist of American citizenship and the Kaiser, we are brought to see that the German command is being impelled toward an attack on Verdun; we see the group soul on both sides taking cognizance of Verdun. One outstanding German commander, Falkenhayn, thinks the attack will be successful and that the French group mind, in losing such an historic place, will become discouraged and move toward peace. Everything then converges on the battle. The climax is reached when certain regiments, in which figure characters familiar from the other volumes of the series, struggle up a hillside after a march of many days and look down on Verdun in flames.

The descriptions of battles are terribly impressive; there are conversations, discourses, and reflections throughout the book showing the old conventions, the old hierarchies in the process of disintegration. In the Kaiser's conversation with the journalist, the latter suddenly realizes that the All Highest has actually been asking his advice, has been talking to him with a pathetic desire for friendship; and this evokes in our minds, slowly, imperceptibly, the knowledge that the Kaiser and Kaiserdom are slipping away from the world scene. Then there is Jerphanion's discourse to Jallez after the former's return from the battle, and through it we see that wars will last as long as a certain group idea lasts, the idea that men should give their lives for the state, for their country: wars will end only when a group idea of a different kind takes the place of this.

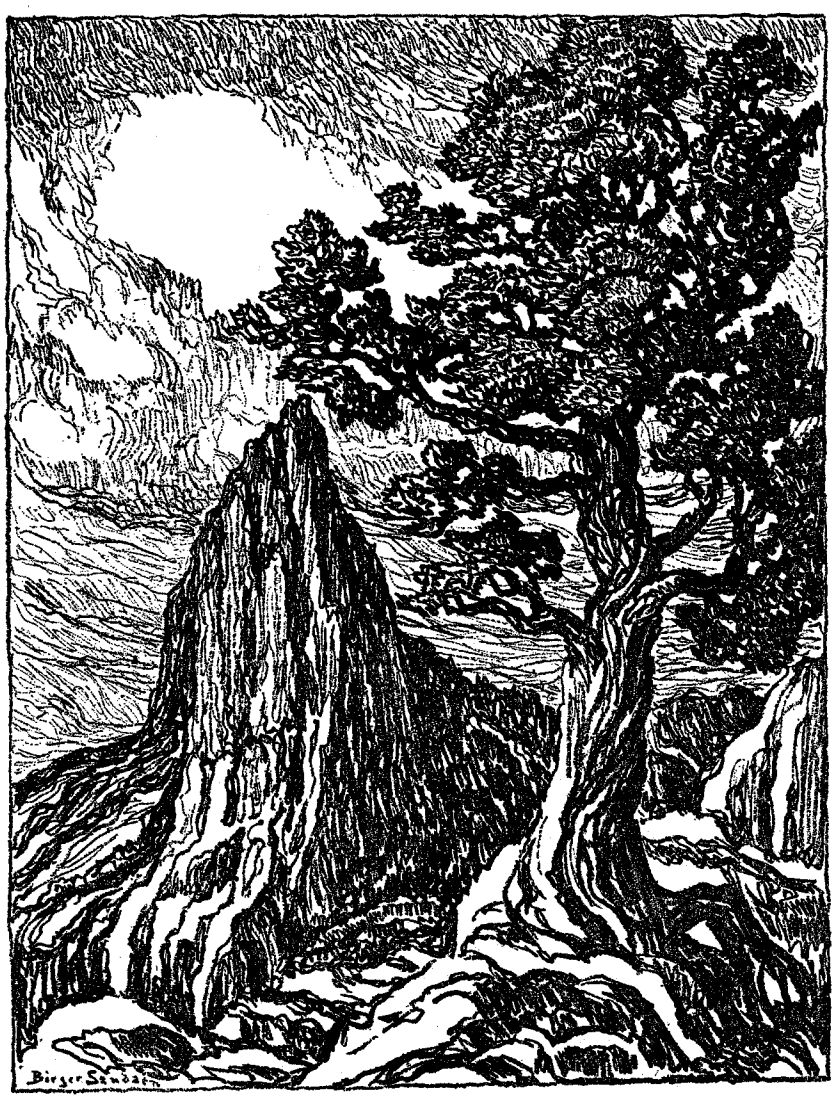
Dealing with the war the way this volume does was the best conceivable way of showing the group mind in action; in no other affair does a population act so completely as one, so unanimously. *Verdun* is a thoroughly impressive book, an extraordinarily interesting book, and one that entailed immense labor. No book could be more timely. It is hard to imagine how a country which produced such thinking, in which such a book has been circulated, could ever go to war again. Here all illusions are stripped from war; it is a misery from start to finish, involving terrible losses to mankind. The ordinary reader need not feel embarrassed by Jules Romains' theories of *unanimisme;* he can be moved by the novel without even thinking of them — or by thinking of them in their simplest dimensions, as simply the author's framework for his story.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Modern Fantasy

No greater contrast could be offered by a publisher to Jules Romains' *Verdun*, with its contemporary history, its intense realization of war, with the historic personages of our time figuring in it, than Robert Nathan's *Jennie*, which belongs, boldly and daringly to that type of literature which the *New Masses* would call "escapist." *Jennie* is a mixture of fantasy and reality. It is the story of an artist, Eben Adams; a picture dealer; his secretary, Miss Spinney; the little girl, Jennie, who is encountered by the artist in Central Park; and a taxi driver named Gus. It is nothing more, perhaps, than an artist's dream of the ideal lady who will lead him to a realization of himself. However, it is, if slender, an exquisite creation, with the charm, the poetry, pathos, and humor, which are always present in Robert Nathan's work and which make what he writes easily memorable among the other writing of our time. Who that has read his *One More Spring*, his *Road of Ages* can forget them?

Robert Nathan has ignored all exhortations to realism, to depictions of the social conflict and so on, and keeps to characters and to a life he loves and dreams about. He makes Central Park a sort of enchanted land, so that it takes on a new interest for what he has written about it. So French writers have made the Luxembourg Gardens and the Bois de Boulogne places to attract romances and pilgrimages. Jennie of Central Park seems to be both real and a phantom, a creature who runs in and out of time, who dies for the hero in the hurricane in which he tries to rescue her from the mounting sea but who dies for the rest of the world in a wave that washes her overboard as she is returning to America after a stay of eight years abroad, eight years that do not seem to have any existence for the hero. But the character of Gus, the Jewish taxi driver, is solid enough, and a very real New York type he is. Gus, pondering why the Jews were the Chosen People, comments:



> We weren't chosen for no favors; we were chosen because we were tough, and He needed us like that so we could tell the world about Him. Well, the world don't want to listen. . . . Jesus was a Jew, wasn't he? He told them, and what did it get Him? If you did what Jesus said today you'd be kicked around so fast that you wouldn't know your tail from a hole in the ground.

A Master of the Short Story

It is forty years, I suppose, since W. H. Hudson wrote the stories that are republished as *Tales of the Pampas*. That was the golden age of the short story in English. Kipling was writing then, but there were few people who knew that Kipling had a peer in W. H. Hudson. This writer's *Green Mansions* and *The Purple Land* and his naturalist's books about South America and England had a limited public, but his short

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

stories never had a vogue. Yet these stories that have South America for their scene are unforgettable; all five have the indefinable quality that is in a legend — a sense of locality, a wildness, a strange violence and a strange tenderness, a fantasy, a relish for exceptional character.

The stories are brief — one can read the longest of them at a sitting — but something epical comes through each of them, especially through the first story, "El Ombu." It is the story of the successive dwellers in a house that is now a deserted ruin. We know Don Santos Ugarte, with his white skin, his proud temper, his air of authority, his numerous "children of the wind," as we know some figure in the old Spanish ballads. In all the stories there is the immense distance of the pampas; it is not described but it comes to us in the galloping horses, the hard-driven herds of cattle. The writing is superb — flowing and yet with the dignity that goes with the Spanish-speaking men and women, descendants of the conquistadors.

It is strange what Englishmen can do in the writing craft. Doughty gave us the soul of the Semite of the desert in *Arabia Deserta*, and, in a way comparable to Doughty's, Hudson gave us the soul of the dwellers of the pampas. The book is beautiful, and one hopes that it will not be lost in the tide of newly written books but that it will be read, especially by young writers — and not only read by them but analyzed and pondered over.

But the short story is now in eclipse — temporarily, one hopes. The last magazine in America that published really distinctive and lively short stories was *The Smart Set*, which was for a time edited by Henry L. Mencken and George Jean Nathan. Besides being editors, these two were for a fertile decade or more the playboys of American criticism. Partly literary, partly social critics, they lambasted the country for its intellectual follies, its provincialisms, and for everything else that came into their heads at odd moments. Some of the years that their consulate covered were years in which an independent American literature grew up and in which American intellectual dependence on Europe faded out. For the sudden coming of age of American intellectual influence a share of credit is due to Mencken and Nathan. What they really did was to help America get up a sales resistance to plausible humbug, especially plausible European humbug.

The 'Sage of Baltimore'

There were others, critics and historians who did it more gravely, perhaps more profoundly, perhaps with more effect; but Mencken, who in *Happy Days* begins his autobiography, made people laugh at themselves.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

His mockery was all the more effective because he delighted in what he mocked and satirized. He had no great angers or *saeva indignatio;* people might not have stood it if he had. He had a whole battery of mockery and good-natured insults that delighted the very people he showed up, the "booboisie" and the Rotarians. Once he took the present writer to task for using, as he said, a rapier on someone on a particular occasion — a steam roller or a cudgel is better, he said, for they leave some part of a man unharmed, but a rapier gets a man in a vital spot and finishes him. His own preferred weapons were steam rollers and cudgels, and often the victim didn't mind the attack too much or thought it was directed at somebody else and got him only accidentally.

The Baltimore of Mencken's *Happy Days* is a *gemütlich* German town, full of beer drinkers and musicians, with a population of diverting Negroes in the hinterland. Henry and his brother slept, Germanlike, with feathers underneath them and a feather construction over them. The first school he was sent to was run by a German, Professor Friedrich Knapp, one of whose claims for his school was that none of its graduates had ever ended on the gallows. There was a singfest every morning, with the Professor at the violin, his daughter at a parlor organ, and everybody joining in *Goldene Abend Sonne*. What, one wonders on reading of these goings-on, changed the Germans from being a simple, song-singing, beer-drinking, toy-making folk, devoted to learning, into saber rattlers? Was it Bismarck with his "blood and iron"?

Mencken's initiation into literature was not, however, through German, but through *Huckleberry Finn*, that genuine American classic. "If I undertook to tell you," he writes, "the effect it had on me, my talk would sound frantic and even delirious. Its impact was generally terrific." He read more and more of Mark Twain, but *Huck* he continued reading once a year for most of his life. Now the influence of that book can be traced in a good deal that Mencken has written; it helped give him a peculiar American humor and a distinctive American style. His youth was not without a personal acquaintance with authors: he knew the reverend author of *What a Young Boy Ought to Know*, a best seller in its time, which was, as he points out, the volume that started those books on sex hygiene which have developed into a major American industry.

Mencken's account of his father does not, of course, compare in character and humor with Clarence Day's; his well-relished style has become a little stiff and does not bounce across the page as merrily as of old. Nevertheless, *Happy Days* is a pleasant book, and one hopes that Henry Mencken will go on with these reminiscences, for they should include the most characteristic and fast moving period of this country's intellectual growth — 1900 to 1930.

Playboy of the Theatre

The other playboy of the team, George Jean Nathan, specialized in the drama and in what might be called post-Shavian dramatic criticism. Bernard Shaw was the first modern critic to give an edge to writing about plays. He gave it partly by the shrewdness of his comment and partly by his unconventional manner. There is always an edge to what Nathan writes about the drama, but he has come to depend too much on the less elegant vocabulary of what might be called the English vulgate to reinforce the unconventionality and the running shock. But now we are so accustomed to the vulgate in the dialogue of modern realistic novels and plays that it somehow fails of its effect in straight prose articles on the theatre.

In the *Encyclopaedia of the Theatre* Nathan is especially good in his criticism of acting (and dramatic critics have seldom as penetrating and sensible things to say about this as have the more persistent theatregoers who never commit their reactions to print). I think it might be in order, however, to disagree with this seasoned critic's verdict on some of the plays he reviews here. To use an expression of his own, he is a sucker for Irish plays. He informs us:

> The Irish alone appear to know the human heart. More and more it is evident that it is to Ireland we must look for plays of merit and repute, or at least to some stray in another land with some trace of the blood of Saint Patrick.

Now I know something about Irish plays and I take it on myself to say that they have been steadily declining, for more than a decade, into a dither of fake philosophy and fake poetic sentiment that nobody would stand for in the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

heyday of the Irish revival. No recent Irish play put on by a Broadway manager has been more than mediocre, and the Abbey Theatre has not attracted any high-class dramatic talent in years. The lengthy and artificial speech which George Jean Nathan quotes with approval on page 206 would never have got by the Abbey Theatre direction in its prime, nor would the author be left at liberty to imagine that that sort of lingo represented either thought, poetry, or dramatic speech.

Our encyclopaedist of the theatre almost loses his mind when he comes to deal with the Pulitzer award for the best play of the year. That the Pulitzer jury chose *Our Town* in preference to *Of Mice and Men* (the choice of the Critics' Circle, of which he is President) and *Abraham Lincoln in Illinois*, which the Critics' Circle passed over, moves him to the most intemperate expressions in the vernacular. *Of Mice and Men* was a good play; but it was difficult for many critics, including Brooks Atkinson of the *New York Times*, who also belongs to the Critics' Circle, to see how any assembly could have chosen it in preference to *Our Town*, which broke such fresh ground in the theatre. The truth is that the Critics' Circle is a miscellaneous body of theatre reporters and some very high-class dramatic critics; it is very difficult for such a conglomerate body to reach any clear decision. What common ground can be between, say, Kelcey Allen and Joseph Wood Krutch in what George Jean Nathan calls "aesthetic critical sense"? Would it not be more effective if the Critics' Circle chose from its group a jury of three, like the Pulitzer jury, to pick the best play of the year?

Further, some Pulitzer playboy seems to have made a fool of the great playboy of American theatrical criticism, for the information which George Jean Nathan tells us he has derived from his private Ogpu about the personnel and conduct of the jury and other matters has the fantasy of a Russian "purge trial." If he could not have uncovered the true facts, he could at least, like any other critic, have discovered through a telephone inquiry that what he set down as facts are incorrect.

When George Jean Nathan praises *Of Mice and Men* for its "stripped emotion and unabashed realism," he is praising it for some of the stalest qualities in contemporary writing. Unabashed realism commonly means that a writer has depicted the lowest strata of humanity doing the most debasing things. This is supposed to represent real life. But the doings in *Of Mice and Men* really represent a far less common experience in the life of the ordinary human being than a vision of angels. *Our Town*, though it had scenes of the supernatural, represented a life both actually and spiritually familiar to countless Americans, given an exaltation and a mystery through the imagination of the writer. However, there is some temerity in setting up an opinion against that of so accomplished and distinguished a critic and one whose work for the theatre is so illuminating.

Leonardo's Universal Mind

To pass from any book of our time to *The Note Books of Leonardo da Vinci* is to be made to realize how meager and unenterprising even the fullest mind of our day is. These notebooks make a thick volume of over a thousand pages, admirably arranged and translated by Edward MacCurdy. Mr. MacCurdy also contributes a preface written with a high intellectual appreciation of his subject; into fifty pages he puts the maximum of clear information and enlightening comment.

It gives us an extraordinary sense of elation to realize that a human mind could reach such summits as Leonardo's did. Edward MacCurdy compares him with Goethe, the last of the great universal minds, but Goethe left behind him no such legacy of terrific vitality, a vitality that for centuries has awakened creative effort in others. Edward MacCurdy's Leonardo is not the Leonardo of Paul Valéry, nor the Leonardo of Freud; still less is he the Leonardo of Pater's essay on the painter of the Mona Lisa. In fact, the notebooks, the preface, and especially the self-portrait that is the frontispiece pull us completely away from that lonely and mournful personage whose painting was the subject of Pater's famous lines: "She is older than the rocks among which she sits." The portrait shows a face of extraordinary boldness and confidence, with a magnificent forehead, a rocklike mouth — the face of a man who could have no regrets or failures, the face of one who thought and labored hard and found the maximum of satisfaction in so doing. "Time stays long enough for those who use it," was the bold saying of this untrammeled spirit.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Leonardo da Vinci's notebooks are really an encyclopaedia or, as they would name it in the Middle Ages, a Summa, with articles on anatomy, astronomy, acoustics, optics, botany, geology — in fact on everything under the sun. Their author was not only a great painter, a sculptor, and a musician but a great scientist, investigator, and discoverer. His explorations went almost round the circle of human interests.

His writings show, as his editor tells us, that he lived only for things of the mind. It is a good thing to be reminded, in a sex-ridden age like ours, that this man showed so little concern for such matters. Under the divergent activities of his restless intellect there was always a unifying impulse that served as a discipline for his powerful, wandering mind. As he works on some engine of war he notes, "When besieged by ambitious tyrants, I find a means of offense and defense in order to preserve the chief gift of nature which is liberty." Freedom was what he was always striving for — freedom for the shackled minds of men, freedom of aerial flight. He wanted to give men wings for the body and mind; he was always watching the free flight of birds, the free movement of water; he worked among all free things. "If liberty be dear to you," he wrote, "may you never discover in my face love's prison."

There are two sentences of his which every artist, whether in paint or words, should hang in his workshop. The first is: "A good painter has two chief objects to paint: man and the intention of his soul; the former is easy, the latter hard." The second: "Those who are enamored of practice without science are like a pilot who goes into a ship without rudder or compass and never has any certainty where he is going." The core of all artistic criticism is in these two sentences.

Forum Quiz Answers

1. (*a*) *dance* [Current slang for jitterbug variety of dancing.]
2. (*a*) *an armed vessel disguised as a merchant ship*
3. (*c*) *The U. S. army's newest rifle is the Springfield.* [False — automatic-loading Garand, which can fire much faster, now being adopted.]
4. (*c*) *imitative*
5. (*a*) *Colonel Batista* ["strong man" of Cuba]
6. (*c*) *Lou Gehrig* [of New York Yankees]
7. (*b*) *Green Bay Packers* [of Green Bay, Wisconsin]
8. (*b*) *And things are not what they seem.*
9. (*b*) *a series of steps* [Ships parallel to but not directly behind each other — they are in a line which makes an angle with direction in which they are heading, as geese sometimes fly.]
10. (*a*) *more* [Birth rate always high, but also death rate, which began to fall about 1890. Now some 352,000 Indians in U. S. — about half as many as in 1492 — but the number is now growing.]
11. (*a*) *is the world's most expensive fur* [Chinchillas now being bred experimentally in this country.]
12. (*b*) *a test run* [to determine performance under all conditions]
13. (*b*) *Carl Sandburg* [*Abraham Lincoln, the War Years* — Harcourt, Brace, $20.]
14. (*c*) *California* [On Mt. Palomar, 80 miles south of Mt. Wilson observatory.]
15. (*c*) *Warner Brothers* [See, for example, James Cagney's pictures.]
16. (*c*) *The Greeks used the Corinthian capital.* [Corinthian is bell-shaped capital with acanthus-leaf design, later became a Roman favorite. Gothic *followed* Byzantine style. Romans considered first users of arch.]
17. (*a*) *on the wane*
18. (*c*) *Christopher Morley* [Lippincott, $2.50.]
19. (*a*) *220,000 men*
20. (*c*) *Walt Whitman* [Characteristic bit from *Song of Myself.*]
21. (*b*) *"The war's certainly a flop from a correspondent's point of view, isn't it?"* [Van Paasen, former European correspondent of *New York World*, author of *Days of Our Years.*]
22. (*b*) *Joaquin Miller*
23. (*b*) *206* [And they all ache at times.]
24. (*a*) *Robert Burns*
25. (*c*) *"Ach, those planes of yours are fast!* [Messerschmitt is designer of many modern German fighters.]
26. (*b*) *Joseph B. Eastman* [Eccles, head of Federal Reserve system; Williamson, President of New York Central.]
27. (*b*) *Schopenhauer*
28. (*b*) *"I'm a disembodied spirit already, sweet."* [Levitation is lifting or appearing to lift the body, without mechanical means, in air — also the subjective illusion of moving through air, as in dreams.]
29. *embarassed* [Should be *embarrassed.*]
30. (*a*) *a rich fabric with a raised pattern*
31. (*c*) *chest* [First step was to design one drawer in bottom of chest, for convenience — others followed later.]
32. (*b*) *crawl*
33. (*b*) *David Copperfield* [Considered autobiographical.]
34. (*d*) *Winston Churchill* [novelist, historian, biographer, correspondent in Boer War]
35. (*d*) *It might have been!*
36. (*a*) *"A person who thinks he's persecuted."* [Also usually has delusions of greatness. Don't be a cynic — (*b*) and (*c*) are really not the same thing.]
37. (*b*) *Scaramouche*
38. (*d*) *Oxford, England*
39. (*b*) *Japan* [Shinto is chiefly reverence to spirits of imperial ancestors, some deities of nature. Long interwoven with Buddhism until separated by law after 1871.]
40. (*b*) *white* [Stripes are black or dark brown.]

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Country Boy Goes Home

by **R. HAVELOCK-BAILIE**

TODAY WE ARE LIVING in a world far different from that of forty years ago. Recalling those far-off days, many people see only a dreamy, carefree life. Their picture of yesterday is colored by the idle hope of what tomorrow may lay at their feet. I am glad that I remembered from forty years ago a lesson in the art of living that is serving me well today.

My earliest recollections have to do with hard work and simplified living. Father liked to see what was around the next turn of the road, and I remember distinctly that endless rambling, the covered wagon lumbering over vast territories, while we searched for some elusive Utopia.

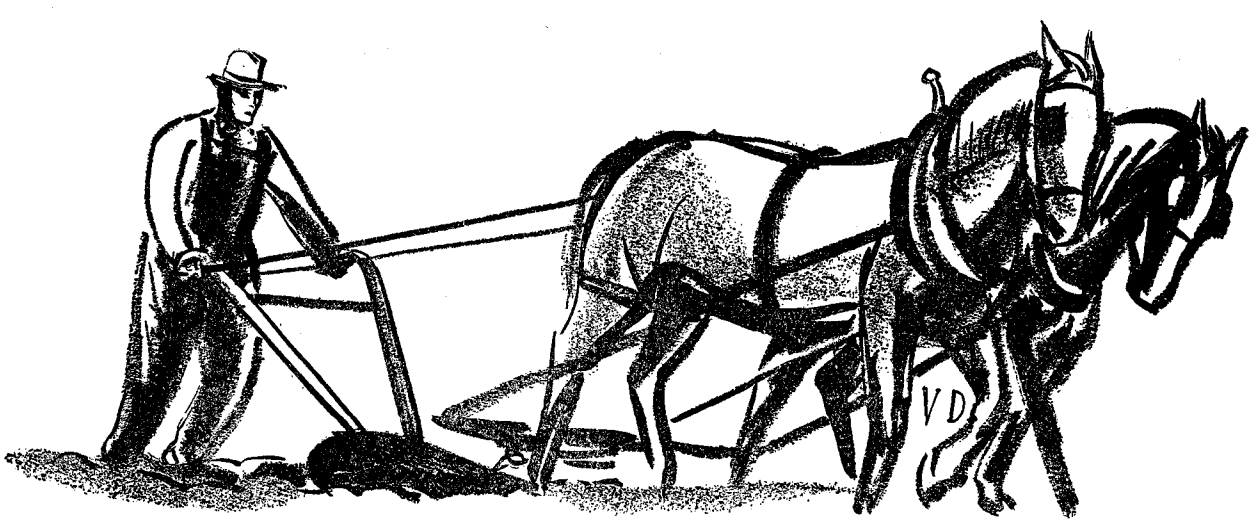
With pots and pans hanging from the wagon, we crossed the States of Illinois and Missouri to Kansas. There my father, mother, and elder brother built a sod house on free land, broke the virgin prairie, and planted wheat with seed brought from Illinois. My mother made a garden. The wind blew; the sun beat down; and the rain stayed away. I don't believe either the garden seed or the wheat have come up yet.

Soon my parents talked of the green trees, rolling hills, and sparkling streams of the "middle" west. This talk and the vision in back of it brought more weeks of slow travel behind a team of mules, fighting, after we reached the Indian territory, everlasting rain and mud. We crossed into the Arkansas hills, traversed them to southern Missouri, where we settled.

The next few years were spent in a one-room log house built on a wooded "quarter." We cleared ground and grew little patches of ribbon cane, wheat, and some cotton. The cotton was our money crop, bringing from thirty to sixty-five dollars a year.

We never had as much as five dollars in the house at once. Our money went to the settlement store in payment for shoes, clothes, a little sugar, and kerosene. But I can still see the table piled with corn bread, fresh sweet butter, chicken, and dumplings. We lived high.

I had a half-brother and -sister living in the State of Washington, and they were forever urging us to come there. They wrote glowing reports of money to be made. Finally



Drawing by Victor De Pauw

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

everything was sold, and in due time we arrived in Seattle, very broke and extremely bewildered.

My father and brother went to work as day laborers, and I went to school. Father's job paid two dollars and a half per day, while my brother received one seventy-five. Four dollars and a quarter per day were, to us, riches.

We saved a little money. I went to high school and college. I traveled. Years later, I became a rather wealthy man, via the oil business.

Father once learned a line from Alexander Pope, "We need but little here below, nor need that little long." Aside from Biblical quotations, it was his favorite. I heard it many times but gave no thought to what he meant or what Pope had meant until I was nearly forty years old. From the day I left college until that time, I was too busy making and spending money to think of it.

People who have never been through an oil boom will have difficulty believing how much money can be made — and how easily. An oil boom is — or was — a peculiar, almost an insane, proposition. Everybody makes too much money and soon loses all sense of proportions and values.

I was by way of being a "big shot." During one long period I had an income of about ten thousand dollars a *day*. I built a costly home, with a four-car garage for my expensive cars. I had a plane and a pilot to take me from place to place, for I was always in a hurry — then.

The Ax

Together with many others, I did not believe the crash when it came. We sent good money after bad, grabbing leases here, protecting leases there. I could have salvaged enough to keep me comfortably for the balance of my life but at that time I understood neither a boom nor a crash. I thought I had made money because of a money-making strain within me. I thought I could still make money, and two years passed before I decided, rather late, that I had better do another kind of thinking.

My wife's eighteen-hundred-dollar-a-week check for oil royalties had dwindled to, believe it or not, six cents. I had three thousand dollars in Liberty Bonds. Before the house went for taxes, I sold the bonds, took a fling at Mexican oil, and lost what was left.

I returned to Oklahoma with less than a dollar in cash. My wife was staying with her people. I could have gone there, but pride forbade my coming on the scene until I had something besides an appetite.

I lived alone in a small, dingy room. I sought work with half a heart and was pretty low in spirits. I talked and thought much of the immediate past. This was bad until I got to thinking way back — all the way to my childhood.

Gradually I came to realize that I'd been taking and expecting too much from life. I hadn't given in proportion to what I'd received. No man could. The simplicity of existence in my youth now seemed a very desirable thing, and I wanted it back.

There were complications, but soon my wishbone was replaced by a backbone, and I made definite plans. I called several times on the pawnbroker and eventually had almost two hundred dollars cash, my books, and a 1927-model Essex in very bad repair. I set out for the Ozark Mountains. The prodigal son was going home. But no one there would slay the fatted calf for me.

The hills, pretty enough, held no particular promise. I did not feel like an adventurer seeking life. I felt like a fool, running away from life. I needed a drink of hard liquor, a good dinner, and a good bed. What I got was a drink of well water, a dinner of boiled potatoes and cabbage, and a corn-shuck bed at the hill farm of a man named Holdencroft.

I had had my last flat tire in front of his ramshackle house. The entire Holdencroft family watched me fix it. From their actions and talk, I realized how far I'd gone in a few hundred miles. I had gone at least fifty years — back.

The house, unpainted, was constructed partly of logs and partly of clapboards. There were three rooms and an attic. The furniture consisted almost entirely of beds, although there were also a cracked wood stove, a home-made table, and many split-hickory chairs. The floor boards were bare, worn, and fairly clean.

Holdencroft told me that he had lived there fifty-five years. He seemed industrious, had probably worked hard all his life. Yet the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

entire furnishings of the house could not have been worth fifty dollars.

What, I wondered, did this country have to offer me? Comparing its apparent possibilities with what I had known, it did not seem promising. But I was tired enough to sleep well, even on the uncomfortable bed allotted me, and the next morning things looked better. I recalled a famous man's remark that the best hours of the day are between five and eight in the morning. Watching the sun rise over those hills, I decided he knew what he was talking about.

I asked Holdencroft about land.

He said any farm was for sale. "But the ground's all wore out," he added. "Can't raise nothin' on it."

I looked out over the hills, and as far as I could see was timber — not big timber but healthy. I knew nothing about farming, but it seemed to me that land fertile enough to grow timber ought to grow a living for a man — and I'd come too far to turn back. I don't mean I had come too many miles. I'd come too far in my thoughts and plans to tuck my tail in and run for the cities. I couldn't have lived with myself had I done that.

In my driving the day before, I had seen many hill farms. The buildings in almost every instance were in bad repair, and one could tell they had stood many years — had been built by a race of man not only hardy but visionary. The soil those men had wrested from the wilderness had given them bread, had given bread to their children. Yet these children, now grown and with children of their own, had failed to go on with the business of clearing and had worn to its death the land their fathers had opened for them. The majority were not, I think, looking for something for nothing. They simply lacked vision or had taken the course of least resistance for so long that there now seemed to be no other road open for them to follow.

I ended up by buying twenty acres of timber, on the county road, from Holdencroft. I paid fifty dollars cash for it, and he felt that he had skinned me to the bone.

A New World

After that, life was not easy. It is never easy for a man who has lived too well, is soft and overweight, has soaked his tissues with too many quarts of bad whisky, to emulate early American pioneers.

I chopped down trees, grubbed stumps from the ground, gathered underbrush. I carried rocks from the land and piled them in orderly rows on my property lines. And now and then, creaking and groaning, I sat in the shade, looked at my blistered hands, and wondered if I'd lost my mind. Right now, I'd think, everybody I know is in this or that restaurant enjoying good food, talking of ways to make life easier. I am deliberately making life harder. My friends are preparing to live, and I am preparing to bury myself. It is foolish to try to explain how hard it was to stay.

I had, one might say, no living arrangements at all. I had several Mexican blankets, an army cot, and a large fly tent. I stretched the fly from the car to two trees. My home.

I cooked on an open fire. That makes interesting reading in sportsmen's magazines, but it is not a practical cooking arrangement. One's choice of food is very limited. However, money also was limited, and very often I subsisted on eggs and potatoes by the week.

My first job of clearing was for a garden, and within a month I had potatoes, cabbage, beans, and peas planted. Almost immediately after they came up, it stopped raining or rained rarely. It was then I got an insight into hill psychology.

Everybody — and by this time I knew many people in the hills — spent his time discussing the weather and looking with hopeless eyes at the sky for a rain cloud.

"Efen it don't rain pretty quick," they would say, "we're agoin' to be ruint."

Prayer meetings were held, and loud pleas for rain went up to the Almighty.

Now I think I have my share of religion but I believe also in putting legs under my prayers. I had been carrying water for drinking and cooking from one of Holdencroft's wells, almost a quarter of a mile away. I now dug a well, finding water, lots of it, twenty feet down. I rocked the walls and spent hours each day drawing water and pouring it on the plants in my garden.

For some reason this amused the natives. Their own gardens — their actual life's blood — burned up, while from six to fifteen children in each family did nothing with their idle time. When I politely suggested that they follow my

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

example, I was told: "Reckon efen the Almighty wants our crops to grow He'll send a rain."

But I had vegetables when others did not.

By fall, I had quite some land cleared and many cords of firewood stacked about the place. Aside from that, there were sufficient logs cut and niched to build my house.

We had a "log rolling," and neighbors threw the logs up for me in less than a day. I had then four walls of considerable dimensions. I finished the house that winter and, while it had no floor, I was out but two dollars in cash. That was for nails.

I made, with Holdencroft's help, my own shingles. We took windows from an abandoned building. The doors were made from native lumber, also the hinges — a sort of dowel arrangement that works well and is certainly rustic enough. The house is rustic but it is not *country*.

I borrowed Holdencroft's team and hauled several loads of logs to a nearby mill, leaving part of the lumber as payment. I stacked my share in the house to dry and (though a long time after) I eventually planed it by hand, beveled the edges, and put down a floor which today is the envy of many people. Smooth, of solid oak, and fastened by dowels, that floor is not hard to look at. Some of the lumber was used to make shutters, but those shutters and the floor took almost two years to finish. The two years were not as smooth as the floor.

The winter passed slowly. I built a rock garden and flagged walks. I grubbed stumps, cut more trees. But night arrived early, and time was heavy on my hands. I had no radio, no daily paper. When Roosevelt was elected President I heard of it and — unlike my neighbors — knew this was not Teddy Roosevelt. But the "bank holiday" came and went without my knowledge.

With spring, I put in a larger garden. I sold the car for thirty-five dollars and bought a heifer calf and three pigs. For the most part I let them forage, that being the custom of the country.

Becoming a Hillman

Holdencroft and his eldest son had helped me considerably during the fall and winter, and I owed them many days' work in return. Hot days in his field, insufficient food of the proper sort, long nights when neither the heat nor my army cot was conducive to restfulness left me physically and mentally ready to chuck it all.

Then, too, I had difficulty adjusting myself to the ways of the hillmen. I respected their simplicity and earnestness but could not reconcile myself to their ignorance of almost everything I had grown to accept as commonplace. Few of them had been out of the county. Few had been on a train or seen a movie. Most of them could barely read or write. They didn't believe much that they hadn't seen and they had seen little. There was no common ground on which we could meet until Mrs. Holdencroft awakened me to a great truth. "Anybody goin' to somebody else's country," she said, "has got to be like them people or move on." That was straight from the shoulder.

They were a people who believed largely as their fathers had believed. They wanted to remain as they were, and, thinking it over, I concluded that they were probably more nearly right than those of us who insist on molding the world and its people to fit our own selfish inclinations. If they wanted to believe — as they did and do to this day — that no man can earn as much as two hundred dollars a month; that every plane winging overhead is piloted by a man named Lindbergh; that New Orleans is a State of the Union; that the Almighty put a man in the moon for burning a brush pile on Sunday, they had some sort of a right to those beliefs. And I had to accept them as they were and forget the things I had seen and done — or move on.

Unwilling to admit failure as an American pioneer, I refused to move on. I became, to all outward appearances, one of them. I listened to the tales of what wonder men their old "pappies" had been. I spoke of my own childhood, my own "pappy," but I found a measure of something that was lacking here in the good books I had brought to the hills.

When the New Deal came our way and the slaughter of the hogs began, a change came over these people which, to date, has not adjusted itself.

To a great extent, the hillman's hogs are his livelihood. They are his meat. They are seasoning for his vegetables, shortening for bread, pies, cakes. Deprived of his hogs, the hillman is in a bad way. But federal men came

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to town, offering cash money to simple folk. I knew something about the dollar sign and what it does to people. I knew something also about the inconvenience of hunger. Advice based on that experience went unheeded.

For my part, I had so little money that I resolved to have food, not alone for that day but for whatever time I remained in the hills. I bought hogs. I bought two brood sows, heavy with pigs, and I bought a few shoat. Since Uncle Sam was thumbing his nose at his own laws and creating something of a monopoly, I had to pay much more than the hogs were worth, and it took the last of my money. Times were not easy after that.

Owing to unplanned methods of operations, all hill farmers need help. I worked for many of them from sunrise to dark, and, while their hog money lasted, I was paid fifty cents a day, plus board. When the hog money was gone and the federal men hadn't got around to buying other things, I received the board, plus promises. Sometimes I was able to get a few chickens, a gallon or two of sorghum, a garden implement, or a quilt. Often I was purposely paid in glass fruit jars.

I worked on my own place, cleared more land. I built bookcases and a two-tier bunk of hand-finished native oak. I landscaped the quarter-acre immediately surrounding my house. What with the rock garden, bordered walks, shrubs, and the large trees I had left standing, my home gradually took on an appearance of respectability and, I hope, beauty.

My clothes were by this time completely native — faded and worn overalls, heavy shoes, shabby hat, hickory shirt. My hands were rough and callused, and my body hard.

I knew the world outside was finding things difficult, but my sympathies were not outside. Most of the neighbors had all but quit farming and were on relief. With first their hogs and then their cattle exchanged for federal dollars, they were in a bad way. No hill farmer, with his enormous family, can do much on a few dollars a week at the settlement store. The more I saw them try it, the more determined I was to pioneer, even though by doing so I might invite criticism as a small-fry economic royalist.

Once in a while I'd go through the hills and round up my ever increasing band of hogs, herding them to the farm, where I fed them a few ears of corn. The corn did them little good, but it taught them where home grounds were, and soon they were in the habit of looking in without my going after them.

The Home Place

By 1936 I had more than a hundred hogs, and the market went sky-high. My hogs were "acorn" hogs, true enough, but meat on the hoof nevertheless. I fed two shoats corn until they were solid meat, sold them for fifty-five dollars, and bought a little more corn. By repeating this process, I sold, in the winter of 1936–37, eighteen hundred dollars' worth of meat on the Kansas City market.

Then I did a bit of splurging. I bought a good stove, a few pieces of furniture, and some books. I bought a hydraulic ram and several hundred yards of used two-inch pipe to bring water from a creek to the garden. I bought an outfit of clothes and went to Oklahoma City and Tulsa, where, for the first time in five years, I had a "tablecloth" dinner with all the accessories.

The cities hadn't changed much. It seemed that everybody was crying for help and doing little else but cry. I listened to my old friends' tales of woe, then told them what I was doing. "I'm a hillbilly," I said, "and a danged good one."

After a week of city life, I went back to the hills — back home.

I have three hundred chickens now and about sixty hogs. Fruit trees are bearing, and over seven hundred glass jars, the wages of farm labor, are filled with vegetables and stacked away in cupboards. There is a cellar of apples, one of potatoes and other root vegetables. My wife is with me now, and I think she is happy — far happier than in the past.

People come from Tulsa, Dallas, and Kansas City to see us. They eat our fried chicken and hot biscuits, push back from the table and declare they haven't had a meal like that since they were kids. Then they talk about the New Deal, fascism, communism, and kindred subjects. Sometimes my neighbors drop in and listen to the talk with puzzled expressions on their faces.

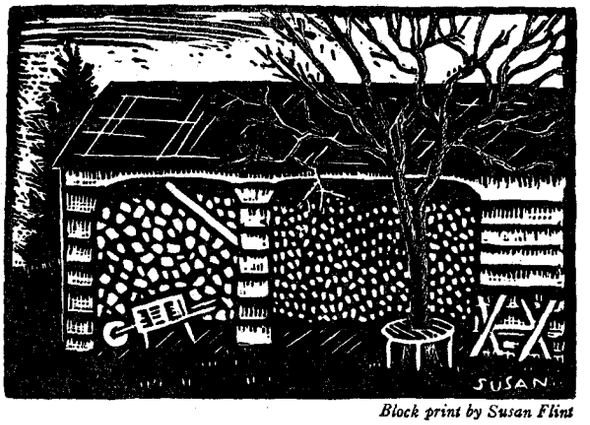
Last Sunday, after my city friends had gone, Holdencroft (who still farms) asked me a question. He said: "You may think I'm ig-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

norant, but what are them communists an' fascists an' such? Some say they're one thing an' some say another. I swear, it all don't make sense to me."

I am not a completely uninformed hillbilly. Nevertheless, I replied: "It don't make sense to me, either, my friend — at least, not much. I take it that a lot of these people my visitors talk about are after more corn bread than they are willing to pay for."

"You can't have corn bread unless you plant corn," Holdencroft said. "An' atter you plant it, you got tuh pull the weeds an' keep the varmints out."



Block print by Susan Flint

Setting Hen

She sets upon her nest. The sounds come in
Of hens that are as she was yesterday,
Her eyes grow wider, and they shine amazed,
She listens to old life a world away.

She has not moved a feather these four hours,
A prowling rat had taken her for dead
And nosed up closer, but he turned and ran
When he saw fire blaze each side her head.

She is so quiet every rustling straw,
Every unexplainable low stir
In dead dry wood has kept her head erect,
Plain sunbeams on the floor seem strange to her.

There are twelve things below her hovering weight,
And they have grown to her, they are a part
Of her alertened being, and they have
The same warmth as the center of her heart.

Her small mind knows what thing is going on,
It is more consequence than food or fear,
She sits on her religion, and she dares
Rats, the sun, and silence to come near.

Robert P. Tristram Coffin

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Fake-Claims Racket

by **ROBERT MONAGHAN**

ONE DAY not long ago a friend hailed me loudly on the street. "Read that," he said angrily, thrusting a letter into my hand.

> Dear Sir:
>
> On behalf of my client, John Doe, I am herewith presenting claim for $125 damages for injuries received when your automobile backed into him as it was leaving a parking space at the curb in front of . . . . We have witnesses. . . .

"Looks as though you're having accident trouble," I said sympathetically.

My friend blew up. "I never heard of the so and so," he exploded. "I wasn't even in town that day and I had my car with me fifty miles away. What'll I do?"

Fortunately, the answer was simple. My friend sent the letter, together with a statement of provable facts, to the secretary of his local bar association. He heard nothing more of the "claim."

Nevertheless, my friend had a narrow squeak. If chance hadn't taken him fifty miles away on the day of the "accident," the probability is he would have become one more cash customer for that new giant among fraud games — the liability claim racket.

Lacking my friend's unique alibi and faced with a similar demand, many a good citizen has dug down in his jeans and paid cash in order to spare himself the trouble and expense of fighting out the swindle in court. Attorneys' retainers, court fees, fear of annoyance, and lack of time combine to break down the average man's determination to buckle on the armor for principle, and, in the end, he takes the easiest way. When you come to think of it, that's exactly what the racketeers count on. They cut the case to fit your pocketbook and trust to luck you're normal.

If you've got a job or a small business, if you're a professional man, or if you demonstrate solvency in any other way, you're an easy target for these little squeeze plays. Once the claim artist has the facts on your ability to pay, he can slip behind your automobile and swear you struck him down. He can trip on your sidewalk, stumble over your doorsill, declare your dog chewed a piece out of his thieving hide, or work any of a dozen other dodges.

All of which is only one department of a racket which feeds on solid citizens, insurance companies, self-insured corporations, and, in fact, anyone who can be held financially responsible for money damages. No one dares estimate the total take throughout the country. Some insurance men say it runs to $14,000,000 a year; others double that figure. A master appointed by the Supreme Judicial Court in Massachusetts to hear testimony during an investigation of automobile liability insurance claims in that State said: "One out of three of these claims is either fraudulent or grossly exaggerated." That would put the finger of suspicion on some $50,000,000 in claim adjustments — approximately a third of the money paid out by casualty insurance companies for automobile accidents last year.

Eccentric Individualists

BUT THE AUTOMOBILE "accident" isn't the only trick up the racketeers' sleeve. They prey on employers with fake compensation cases, on merchants, landlords, restaurateurs, public utilities, and transportation companies. There is the "flopper" who falls in and out of elevators, on stairs and sidewalks, in store and theatre aisles. There is the food specialist, who slips foreign objects into his pie or soup — objects ranging from glass and metal parts to, believe it or not, parts of mice. There is the tumbler, who falls in front of or in and out of taxicabs and busses. There is the emotionally subnormal fellow who submits to terrific beatings which break and fracture his bones, smear him with blood and bruises, cover him with

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

abrasions and lacerations. There is the opportunist, the lad with an old or permanent injury such as a hernia, an unknit bone, an unhealed fracture, an abnormal joint condition — any of which can be dressed up on call and made fit for quick capitalization through an accident claim. And there are dozens of other types and classifications ranging from the ridiculous to the disgusting — all of which help to make illegitimate traffic in liability claims one of the big business rackets.

The racket is operated chiefly in two ways. First, there is the lone wolf — the hedgehopper who skips from town to town nursing a single specialty and counting on one to five hundred dollars a job. He plays a lone hand or carries a partner with him for company and for such light witness duty as may be necessary. Then, there are the gangs, whose personnel usually includes a shyster lawyer, a quack doctor, a handful of willing perjurers to act as witnesses, and the dopes who take the falls and act as victims. Finally there is the ambulance chaser, whose organization policy differs from that of the gang only by a technicality which will be made clear as you read on.

Of the lone wolves, there was Nick the Greek, whose specialty was restaurants. At one time in his life Nick had actually swallowed a tack. It had cicatrized in his stomach and, while it did Nick no harm, it was an imposing sight on an X-ray plate. Nick decided it was a gold mine, and he set out to exploit it. He would walk into a restaurant and order a meal. Halfway through, he would jump up, screaming that he had swallowed a tack. He would insist on immediate hospital and X-ray examination, and then, with evidence as plain as the nose on your face, demand and get at least five hundred dollars.

Another lone wolf was a trick-wrist artist named Salvatore Gemellare, a flopper by trade. Salvatore could throw his left wrist out of joint at will, and, in addition, he knew how to induce a realistic swelling for the injured member by injections of paraffin. An elevator was his usual theater of operations, and a fall out of same, with subsequent "damage" to his trick wrist, was usually good for $250.

Far and away the master of them all, however, in point of sheer technical ability was Frank Riggs, the India-rubber man. Riggs had a unique facility for dislocating nearly every joint in his body, including his hips and lower spine, and during his extensive career as a claim faker he cashed in on it more than three hundred times. By his own boast, his total income from these sources exceeded a hundred thousand dollars, and when he was jailed by Newark, New Jersey, authorities he was wanted simultaneously by police in eight other places.

During his sojourn in New Jersey, Riggs proudly starred in a one-man motion picture for Essex County authorities, showing himself and his bag of tricks in action. His performance is a gem in contortionism, and the film must have been excessively embarrassing to an eminent spine specialist who once unwittingly helped Riggs to a fat settlement by pronouncing him crippled for life. To the specialist's credit, however, is the fact that, once he knew the true facts, he exposed them learnedly in a medical journal. Certainly his embarrassment was easily matched by that of a New York insurance company whose check in payment of a Riggs claim reached Riggs, after devious forwarding, as he lay in the Newark jail!

Big-money crime, however, is an organized business, departmentalized, impersonal, amazingly efficient. Nowhere is this clearer than in the liability claim racket. To be sure, the lone wolves are unique and costly enough, but they are small potatoes alongside the real big shots — the ambulance chasers and the fake-claim syndicates. These well heeled gentlemen are managing to put a real dent in the public pocketbook, and together they divide the big money from faked and exaggerated claims.

Chasing Ambulances

Of this pair, the ambulance chaser is the most numerous and the most skillful in avoiding capture and punishment. Always a member of the bar in "good" standing, he courts a near legitimacy by hiding his crooked trade behind the honorable mantle of his profession. Organization and speed are his business bywords. Behind him is a well paid and pressure-operated staff of lawyers, doctors, runners, hospital attendants, X-ray technicians, perjurers, and helpful hangers-on.

The hardest and most influential worker of the lot is the runner, whose job is to get business by hook *and* crook. The runner chases the ambulances literally as well as figuratively. He operates a grapevine system of communica-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tions, which is judged efficient only if it transmits the news of a juicy accident to his office first, and he does a generous share of the concomitant bribing and fixing. His presence on a lawyer's staff promptly puts that lawyer outside the pale in his profession, for to employ him is a flat violation of the American Bar Association's canon of ethics. In New York, it is unlawful as well.

There aren't any money-making ambulance chasers who don't employ one or two good runners. A pair of such lads who are on their toes should bring in at least thirty good hospital cases a year, and that means a gross annual business of about three hundred thousand dollars for the firm. "Good" hospital business means traffic in compound fractures, spinal injuries, broken bones, disfigurement, amputations, and death.

Like all good salesmen, a runner needs "contacts." Since the focal point for all accident news in most cities is the police department, it is necessary for him to establish diplomatic relationships on a cash basis with corruptible policemen. Some runners get the news from patrolmen even before it is relayed to headquarters. In one known case, a runner not only used this system but persuaded his patrolman to make slight errors in the facts when reporting to the precinct. This was a ruse to outwit competitors. The police radio gives the runners an even faster means of learning about accidents, and in some cases they have arrived on the scene in advance of either the police or the ambulance.

The small group of corruptible policemen on any local force make up only one group willing to accept the ambulance chaser's bribes for services rendered. Hospital employees, orderlies, nurses, technicians, blood donors, and even an occasional intern are in his pay. In one Eastern hospital, the credit manager obligingly recommended counsel to injured patients!

Once the ambulance chaser is certain his runner has a case against a wealthy or an insured individual or corporation, he goes to work to dress it up. He lines up his witnesses and, if there happen to be no legitimate ones, employs a few. He arranges for medical statements and testimony and presses for an early settlement. Again, the prime requisite is speed. Volume operations demand a large number of quick settlements, even if smaller amounts must be accepted. This is less risky and less expensive than taking cases to court.

Some cases require more imaginative treatment, if they are to enter the big-money class. A dancer whose head was injured in a taxi accident signed a retainer with one ambulance-chasing office. She was astonished when she learned that the basis on which her lawyer proposed to proceed was that her feet had been flattened in the collision.

When the ambulance chaser takes a case to court, his techniques of bribery and corruption may be forced to higher and more dangerous limits. The issue to be decided in court usually is not whether an accident has occurred and who was responsible. Rather, the issue is how much, if any, damage has been done — in terms of U. S. currency. Ordinarily, a good ambulance chaser prefers not to trust the size of his verdict to luck and the weight of his medical expert's testimony. A sound belief in forehandedness prompts him to tamper with juries, with court attendants, and sometimes even with the august gentlemen on the bench. All this was made plain during the Massachusetts claim investigation referred to earlier. Disclosures then were sufficient to bring about scores of convictions for jury fixing, bribery, and perjury. Some twenty lawyers were disbarred for their part in the business.

But ambulance chasers are not severely condemned by the public, for a reason which the chasers themselves are careful to exploit. They are often regarded as a necessary evil, and it is thought that, without them, injured persons might suffer at the hands of insurance adjusters and unscrupulous corporations. The sad fact is that gypping the client is the ambulance chaser's most important source of profit; without it, he would be just another negligence lawyer.

Most people believe that the ambulance chaser proceeds on a fifty-fifty contingency basis and that his share is meant to cover expenses. The opposite is true. The chaser gets half the settlement obtained, but the client pays the expenses, at the chaser's figure, out of the client's share. This is the usual practice, but there are shadier ones. Often the chaser makes a private settlement with the third party in the case and later quotes his client a much lower figure. This is easy if the client has signed a blank release form in advance. And the record

DRURY COLLEGE LIBRARY

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is full of cases where the chaser, having made a settlement, tells the client that the case is worthless and must be abandoned.

The ambulance chaser, in short, is an extremely bad egg no matter how you look at him. His effect on the community, its courts and its people, is poisonous.

Injuries Wholesale

If not more dishonest, the fake-claim syndicate is at least more direct in its methods. I said that the difference between the ambulance chaser and the syndicate was a technicality. With the syndicate, *all* accidents are faked, and all injuries are either simulated or made to order. It isn't necessary to have an accident, of course, provided the gang can present a clear-cut case through its hired witnesses, its fake medical testimony, and its shyster legal talent. As often as not, however, the gang thinks it wise to use the facilities of a city hospital, and for these cases some semblance of injury must be provided.

In Pittsburgh, where the racket became known as the "oil business," a group of twenty-five Italians, under the direction of a dapper little man known as the Duke, ran up a total of half a million dollars in fake automobile-accident claims. The Duke posed as an attorney and annexed half the proceeds from every case. He took charge of business administration, provided insurance policies and policyholders, arranged the accidents, and settled the claims.

Part of the Duke's equipment was a home-made injury factory referred to by the gang as the House of Pain. In this torture chamber the "victims" prepared their injuries under the direction of a doctor. They slugged each other with clubs, with bare fists and bags of oranges, with anything that would create business. Perforated strips of tin, sandpaper, nutmeg graters, and other devices produced scratches and abrasions. Knives and razor blades accounted for cuts; mallets took care of broken bones. Chicken blood in the ears simulated a concussion, and a piece of wire bound to the head could create a shadow on an X-ray plate that would look for all the world like a skull fracture. That is, it would if the technician was in on the bribes.

Bruised and bleeding, the Duke's associates were bundled off to the hospital, where they could be viewed by attendants and insurance adjusters. This gang made several hundred claims in Pittsburgh before a general investigation routed it out of business.

Some syndicates make a specialty of public disasters. A wreck on the Chicago elevated line produced more victims with claims for damages than the train could possibly have held, even in a crowded rush hour. In another Midwest city, an empty streetcar, returning to its terminal at three o'clock in the morning, jumped its track and crashed into an abutment. At noon next day, a "lawyer" appeared at the transit-company offices with five claims for damages sustained by "passengers" in the crash. The lawyer spoke of witnesses who would testify in his clients' behalf.

Fighting the Fakers

Yes, the liability claim racket has a good start on its opposing forces. Experts believe it will take years of difficult and expensive campaigning to break down the fakers' closely knit and well entrenched organizations. Sporadic drives and little cleanup flurries are useless. They gather in a few small fry but let the big shots slip; and, as soon as the shouting is over, the racketeers are doing a booming business at the old stand.

Aware of this, the major liability insurance companies are spending a pretty penny to build a line of defense against the racketeers. Through their trade organization, the Association of Casualty and Surety Executives, they have fashioned a fraud-fighting machine called the Claims Bureau.

The Bureau, staffed with trained crime fighters and former "G" men, has outlined two major jobs for itself: (1) to checkmate the lone wolves and other claim "repeaters"; (2) to smoke out the ambulance chasers and fake-claim syndicates.

The first of these is being accomplished through the operation of a claim-reporting system which collects reports with military regularity not only from the insurance companies but from self-insured organizations, municipalities, and others having a claim-payment problem. For speed and convenience in reporting, the Claims Bureau has blanketed the U. S. with card-index offices, to which claim adjusters report their daily claims as promptly as possible. Once a report reaches the index office, operatives get busy on an ingen-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ious method of identification, the details of which the Claims Bureau understandably guards as its own secret. If the method exposes a repeater or if the claim appears otherwise suspicious, a warning is flashed back to the reporter. The system has thus saved its members a respectable pile of money, besides scaring the daylights out of many a would-be faker.

Smoking out the ambulance chasers and the syndicates calls for sterner stuff. One method has been the encouragement and support of broad-gauge investigations in localities where conditions are most acute. Usually, these investigations are financed by local interests, with the Claims Bureau supplying its investigator specialists, who help provide local authorities with watertight cases for prosecution. The local-investigation technique has proved successful in several places.

In Massachusetts, the result was not only satisfactory but startling. Once the investigation got under way, the number of suits filed in Suffolk and Middlesex counties, which have jurisdiction over Boston and its suburbs, dropped from 16,386 to 11,771 in the space of nine months. In the rest of the State there was no change.

In Atlanta, local businessmen mobilized for war on fake claims and secured the appointment of a special prosecutor. Contributions to the war chest poured in from merchants big and small, from little tea rooms to the big Georgia Power Company, each contributing according to financial ability. More than forty convictions were obtained, and four prominent lawyers were sent to the chain gang. Some four hundred claim presentations were abruptly withdrawn, and in a few months the total presentations were one thousand fewer than in the previous year. Atlanta was wise enough to announce its intention to continue the good work by conducting similar investigations without advance notice.

The opposing forces are thus arrayed. The mere citizen has a potent reason for hoping the insurance companies and their corporate friends win the fight; and the reason isn't an academic one, either. One way or another, the mere citizen pays the fraud bill. If he happens not to be insured, he may have to pay direct tribute to the racketeer. If he carries insurance, he pays indirectly through his insurance premium. Insurance companies aren't in business for the fun of it, and, if they are getting stuck because a community is riddled with ambulance chasers and claim fakers, you may be sure they will hand the bill right back in terms of higher rates for public liability insurance.

It may be, though, that this fight will be perpetual. I can't forget the succinct observation made to me by a convicted claim faker out of the side of his mouth as they marched him off to jail. "I'll be back," he announced blandly.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

George Horace Gallup: Oracle in Tweed

by **RICHARD G. HUBLER**

GEORGE HORACE GALLUP sits firmly on an occupational tripod. One support — a vice presidency in the Young & Rubicam advertising agency — is planted in New York. Another — the head directorship of the American Institute of Public Opinion — is embedded in Princeton, New Jersey. The third — unlimited use of Opinion Research, Inc. — is plunged deep into the eccentric American mind.

Beneath his perch, tended by squads of statisticians, steams the cauldron of a chaotic world. Three times a week Gallup sniffs its vapors and prophesies with authority. He is admittedly a streamlined oracle, with all scientific attachments.

Ask him a question, and within a fortnight — three days, if a rush job is demanded — he will have sampled the public's consciousness and diagnosed the answer within 4 per cent of absolute accuracy. Nine out of ten times he will be right. In the past three years he has become America's foremost soothsayer.

Dr. Gallup — his name dangles a Ph.D. as well as a B.A. and M.A. from the State University of Iowa — looks like a grownup, dog-eared edition of a 4-H Club boy. His heavily muscled shoulders, draped in tailored tweeds selected by his wife, are the best features of his solid torso. His face is round and amiable and photographs badly, mainly because of an insolent, tip-tilt nose. His black hair is thinning, but his eyebrows remain nicely bushy.

A twangy drawl — purest Iowese — makes his voice pleasant and, in moments of stress, blurs his words. Few stenographers other than his secretary can translate Gallup dictation.

His working day is from nine in the morning to five or six at night. Between the latter hours he disappears from New York, turning up an hour later in his remodeled Princeton farmhouse. There "Ted" — the nickname's origin is unfathomable — kisses his wife, gulps his supper, sends the children to bed, and starts work again, this time on the Institute reports. Young & Rubicam may own his body, but his soul belongs to the Institute.

His New York office is a madhouse. Big and comfortable, littered with easy chairs and landscape photographs, it has supplied background for scenes worthy of the Marx brothers.

There was, for example, the man who wanted to expose a famous publisher.

"Why?" asked Dr. Gallup interestedly.

"Because," said the man, who had a lean look, "he fired me as elevator operator after eleven years of service."

"What do you want me to do?"

"Just publish the things I say about him."

"And then?"

"That's it," said Gallup's visitor eagerly. "He'll sue us, and I'll show him up some more in court."

Then there was the man who wanted Gallup to establish "thinking rooms" for hotels. "One for men and another for women," he enlarged. "Don't mix the thinking. All rooms painted in nice colors, with murals, dim lights, and soft music. Just for thinking." Gallup said he would think about it.

II

THE DELPHIC DOCTOR was born in Jefferson, Iowa, thirty-seven years ago. Jefferson population increases on the average of one and a half persons a year, so his birth was something of an event. He came from English Dorset stock (Gallup's hobby is genealogy and he has run his ancestors back across the Atlantic and down to the ould sod). His parents were

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

independent Episcopalians — and so is Gallup.

He went to school at the State University, where he violated the success tradition of America by not playing football on any team. As an instructor in journalism, he met Ophelia Miller. There is a story — doubtless apocryphal — that he took a survey of the campus to determine the prettiest girl. When the results indicated Ophelia, the legend continues, he proposed to her. At any rate, after a six-month courtship, they were married.

As editor of the *Daily Iowan*, the college paper, Gallup learned more about selling space than editing. He put down his experiences in a book, in 1927: *The Business Department of School Publications*.

Following graduation, he catapulted through the scholastic world with startling speed. In swift succession he taught journalism at Iowa, Drake, and Northwestern, becoming a visiting professor at Columbia a little later. He spent his spare time amassing his degrees and getting a first glimmering of his present poll technique. His students made the original surveys and secured valuable basic statistics. Some of their findings he incorporated in his Ph.D. thesis, "Objective Methods for Measuring Reader Interest in Newspapers."

In 1932 he left the Middle West to go to New York as Research Director for Young & Rubicam. The next year, the trade publications dubbed him "the most discussed man in the advertising world."

Though this formidable designation still holds true, Gallup still likes to sprawl at his desk and chew thoughtfully on a cud of dead cigarettes (he has sworn off smoking). He has professorial fits of forgetfulness remaining from his academic days. "I never lost anything in my life," he says with his booming laugh, "but I sure misplace a lot of stuff." His secretary, resigned to this failing, waits patiently a few months until the missing articles turn up on his desk or in his pockets. Gallup's own filing system resembles W. C. Fields's famed routine — piling all items in a heap and pulling one out at random.

His wife and three children — George, Jr. (eight), Alec (eleven), and Julia (one) — live in a pleasant early-American farmhouse a few miles outside Princeton. Here Dr. Gallup takes his ease as a country squire by bouncing over his three hundred acres atop a tractor and tending his small purebred herd of Aberdeen Angus cattle.

As a private citizen Gallup is somewhat of a typical and model American. He pays strict attention to business, admits cheerfully that his prime motive in life is to make his family comfortable. Flummery and red tape are his aversions; an occasional beer, horseback riding, and heroic novels his favorite relaxations. On vacations he still pursues factual knowledge. Last November in Florida he spent most of two weeks reading a fat atlas from cover to cover.

The lengthened shadow of this personality is the American Institute of Public Opinion. From this Gallup draws comparatively little income — perhaps ten thousand dollars a year. From Young & Rubicam, however, he nets somewhere in the neighborhood of twenty thousand or more yearly for his work as a research director, vice president, and compiler of surveys on radio programs, advertising campaigns, and consumer appeal. This work is mainly technical and concerns copy and merchandising markets. A summary of these findings — particularly on newspapers — is published every year in the trade press.

III

In spite of his reputation for never being wrong in national affairs, Dr. Gallup denies any occult talents. For his uncanny results he draws on a personal experience of more than fifteen years, plus a history of experimental straw polling that reaches back more than forty years.

"The Institute," he explains, "was an inevitable development. It's merely an efficient tabulation of democracy."

Popping off, Dr. Gallup points out, is a great American pastime. From the orchidaceous phrases of Daniel Webster to the declarations of Dizzy Dean, our history amounts to little more than an array of burly opinions — as often as not on matters that were none of our business.

This habit of opining produced a phenomenon. Out of Arkansas hot-stove sessions and New England town meetings came the force of public opinion. The collective ideas of America emerged as a jolting factor in world affairs.

Early efforts to determine the direction and temper of this attitude came at the turn of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the century. The *New York Herald* attempted national election predictions based on cross-country samples. Other editors used the scheme to build up anemic circulation lists. Few cared for results. If successful, the stunt provided copy for the promotion department; if not, the whole thing could easily be ignored or alibied.

The *Literary Digest* brought the straw poll into the big time. For a number of years, notably from 1920 to 1932, it enjoyed success. In 1936, however, it came a cropper from which it never recovered. Its two and a half million straws indicated a 54-per-cent Landon victory. Roosevelt won 60 per cent of the votes.

Gallup, in the prediction business just over a year, had foretold a 53-per-cent Roosevelt victory. He had also estimated the *Digest's* fiasco with cruel accuracy — within 1 per cent. On the strength of that coup his technique vaulted onto the front pages and has remained there since.

The Institute is not chary with reasons for the *Digest* collapse. It is explainable, they aver, by the fact that the straws were selected at random, using telephone books and city directories to supplement the magazine's subscription list. Since its readers were mainly of the upper strata, it missed the significant shift of labor and the unemployed to the Democratic banner. In addition, the *Digest* poll was taken months before the actual election and before a popular shift to Roosevelt.

The Gallup men take pains to avoid such statistical snobbery. They use six categories: (1) voters from each State; (2) men and women; (3) farm voters and town voters, the latter in towns of 2,500, 10,000, 100,000, and 500,000 and above; (4) all age groups; (5) income groups of rich, above average, average, poor plus, poor, WPA, home relief; (6) all political parties. This, they believe, is at the moment a realistic cross section of America.

Between six and seven hundred field workers — members of Opinion Research — pump the members of these classifications on an average of six hours a week. Most of them are young men who enjoy working week ends and earning the sixty-five cents an hour (and traveling expenses) that their Opinion Research contracts call for. Only agents of undeniable character, heavily buttressed with recommendations, are selected. The majority have never seen Gallup or his immediate coworkers. Contact is maintained by mail.

The only checkup available on these essential cogs in the Institute machine is a comparative one: If an individual's results do not check with the majority from a district, that worker is under suspicion. Another laborer in the vineyard of votes is detailed to scout the suspect and report to headquarters.

As the homing ballots begin to pour into the Princeton cote, adding machines and tabulators commence to rattle fortissimo. The returns on political questions are carefully weighted in accordance with the voting population of each state or district — Iowa, with 50 per cent of her citizens voting, will receive five times as much consideration as Georgia, with a record of 10 per cent. The six classes get the same weighting in the case of social opinions. The WPA, with a sixth of the voting population, will get a sixth of the sample votes.

"Somewhere between three and fifty thousand votes," the twelve men and six girls who compute the returns begin to breathe easily. Through long experimentation, they have discovered a saturation point of opinion. At a given number — usually about five thousand — sentiment seems to crystallize. Results thereafter, regardless of the number of ballots, rarely vary more than two or three tenths of one per cent.

Within seventy-two hours after the final straws arrive, the results are on Gallup's desk for thrice-weekly release to the press.

IV

EIGHTY NEWSPAPERS subscribe to the Gallup surveys. Their coverage — Democrat, Republican, independent — blankets the whole United States. Each has an exclusive territory. Each subscriber pays handsomely, according to circulation — from $500 to $25,000 a year. In this way the newspapers keep Gallup in check. He is tied by their contracts. He can do nothing, such as broadcasting, that will interfere with their priority.

Institute questions are selected by Gallup

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and two assistants. They are worded and reworded to eliminate prejudice or ambiguity. The topic is usually one of "hot" news interest with widespread appeal.

Through the Institute's eight hundred odd surveys since October 20, 1935, America has had a firsthand opportunity to become acquainted with its own mind. We do not like presidential third terms, heavy government spending, the K.K.K., sit-down strikes, child labor, inflation, war, women presidents, mercy deaths, and lynching. We do like Roosevelt, balanced budgets, strong supreme courts, organized labor, civil service, the CCC, maximum hours, minimum wages, old-age pensions, England, and capital punishment. We think that the most vital issue today in our country is that of unemployment, that Garner is the most popular Democrat next to Roosevelt, that the Republican Party thinks it will win in 1940. Eighty-four per cent of us want the hopelessly insane sterilized; 70 per cent want birth-control information legalized; 23 per cent want looser divorce laws. We believe in a big army and navy. We are against the closed shop and the League of Nations. As a body politic we are stubborn but willing to be convinced. The "haves" look to the G.O.P. for a savior; the lower groups depend on the Democrats.

Odd reactions on the part of the interviewed often attend the collection of these opinions. A Brooklyn Negro, asked whether the President or Congress should determine the gold content of the dollar, replied coldly: "The President's figurehead, ain't he? It's up to him to do the figurin'." Asked if there was a life after death, a seventy-nine-year-old farmer wrote in a wobbly hand this strangely courageous and individual reply: "I don't know now — but I'll damn soon find out."

These are only a handful of typical ideas dredged from the inexhaustible mind of America. Observers suspect that, plus a kind of persevering, invariable brilliance, George Gallup has the shrewd ability of his native Iowa for calling the turn of events. They believe he sometimes weights his ballots with an exquisitely sensitive "hunch" concerning things to come, that he is gifted with the understanding of his countrymen's peculiarities of mind. In corroboration they cite his success in predicting the neck-and-neck race between Dewey and Lehman for the New York State governorship in 1938. Two polls by major newspapers failed. A 2-per-cent inaccuracy would have tokened disaster. Yet Gallup called the turn within less than 1 per cent.

"Sampling referenda," as Dr. Gallup likes to call his brain children, are not faultless. Several factors may upset their mechanical functioning. Inclement weather may restrict the number of voters at the polls, some classes more than others; last-minute changes in sentiment, graft, bribery, ballot-box tampering — all these may militate against accuracy. The sampling method cannot be refined to the point where it will foretell an election decided by a handful of votes. And the timing of a poll is all-important. The Institute has been guilty of publishing a survey months after it was taken — simply because of added news value. Actually this is dangerous. Reliable straw votes must be taken as close as possible to the real event.

Nor are these disadvantages the only ones that may sprag the trundle of Gallup's juggernaut. The proven accuracy of this straw poll has already impressed America beyond measure. Newspapers and commentators pick it up as gospel; legislators hedge their doings on its findings. Public opinion, once edged in such fashion, may become a dominant influence in democracy. Unfortunately, public opinion is only one of many factors in good government.

But, within well-defined limits, Dr. Gallup has undoubtedly performed a service for democracy at home — a service that must prove increasingly important in coming years. The Director of the Institute likes to tell the story of a friend — a professor of physics — who once drew a line on the blackboard and asked the class to guess its length. Not one guess was right. But the average of all the guesses was exactly the length of the line.

Fifty years ago, James Bryce, the great authority on the American system, wrote in his *American Commonwealth:* "The obvious weakness of government by opinion is the difficulty of ascertaining it." George Horace Gallup believes he has solved the difficulty.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Artist's Point of View

Max Weber: Leading American Artist

When the two largest art books of 1939 (by Craven and Boswell) omit Max Weber from their lists of American artists and when in one of them Boswell says, "Weber is a fine artist, *but not an American artist*," it becomes a critical duty to set the record straight.

Weber is our pioneer modern, in two senses. He was one of the first Americans to assimilate the rediscoveries of Cézanne and the other French moderns and apply them in his work. He gave the first one-man modern show in the United States (in 1909), thus introducing the American public to the revitalization which is the modern movement. In addition to these two historical "firsts," Weber compels respect as a man for his humanism, his broad sympathies and understanding, his courage. He dares to be himself. He dares to attack hypocrisy and the enemies of a living art where and when he finds them. And finally he, the onetime pre-eminent ivory-tower artist, has descended into the street and into the lives of his people to paint, in his own words, "those who carry the burdens of the world."

If an authority on foods should fail to put wheat on his list of food staples, the omission would be no reflection on the inherent value of wheat; it would merely measure the authority's knowledge of his field. The same applies in this case. Weber is a staple in contemporary American painting.

The contribution to American art which Max Weber was among the very first to make is what the moderns describe as the "plastique" of painting. This is an artist's term not widely understood and hard to explain. "Harmonics of color, space, and form," is one way to say it. "Design," when the word is used in the broadened modern meaning, is another. "Organization of all elements into a unity which acknowledges the surface of the canvas as a plane on which a visual harmony is created — instead of treating that surface as if it did not exist, as if it were a pane of glass through which one looked at an actual scene (as naturalistic artists do)," is still another. The qualities which these words attempt to describe are not modern in the sense of being something new. They have been present in the great painting of all creative ages, from the wall paintings of ancient Pompeii to the masterpieces of Giotto, El Greco, the Chinese, and the Persians. Weber learned these from Cézanne, who in turn had learned them from the masters. He also tested Cézanne's findings in the galleries of Europe.

To ignore these qualities of all great painting, as many critics do, or to say their use is "un-American" because Paris first discovered them is to shift criticism from the art of the picture to subject and provincialism — to judge an artist by the materials he chooses for his creation rather than by the creation itself. True, we are tired of studio pictures of still lifes and posing nudes. But these are still a part of human environment and have a reality to be interpreted which is as authentic as the larger drama of American life. The swing to this drama is healthy localism or even nationalism, when not overdone. But the art which determines its expression is international and ageless. Weber brings this art to his painting and to American painting. It is a gift of the spirit far richer than the material out of which it or any picture is built. And it is as American as our language, our music, or our very European-transplanted selves.

A painting by Max Weber, done in 1910, which shows the plastic design or organization of form, space, and color which, at that time, was practically unknown in America and which illustrates the revitalizing influence that the "Paris School" had on all Western painting

Ralph M. Pearson

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED